THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
1800

RUTHERFORD COLLEGE,
BURKE CO., N, C.
Dr. R. L. ABERNETHY, Pres't.

D. Edwin sc.

Rt. Honble. Edmund Burke

MEMOIR

OF THE

LIFE AND CHARACTER

OF THE

RIGHT HON. EDMUND BURKE;

WITH

SPECIMENS OF HIS POETRY AND LETTERS,

AND AN

ESTIMATE OF HIS GENIUS AND TALENTS,

COMPARED WITH THOSE OF HIS

GREAT CONTEMPORARIES.

WITH AUTOGRAPHS.

BY JAMES PRIOR, ESQ.

PHILADELPHIA:
PUBLISHED BY ABRAHAM SMALL.
1825.

IIA506
.B9P8
1825

In Exchange
Duke University
JUL 1 2 1933

TO

JOHN WILSON CROKER, Esq.

LL.D. F.R.S. M.P. &c. &c.

SECRETARY OF THE ADMIRALTY.

SIR,

AN attempt to sketch the life and character of one of the greatest men of modern times, may, with peculiar propriety, be addressed to one of his distinguished countrymen, who is himself connected with that part of Ireland where Mr. Burke spent his earlier days; who acquired his relish for learning in the same venerable academic retreat; who possesses much of his taste, much of his love for the fine arts, much of his literary talents, and no inconsiderable share of his laborious devotion to public business.

That it is worthy of your acceptance, or of its distinguished subject, I am by no means vain enough to believe. To render full justice to his various genius and acquirements, demands some of his own powers; no wonder, therefore, if under so illustrious a burthen *my* pen should break down. But the intention at least may be excused by the admirers of one, whom to remember is to honour; and whom to honour is but another name by which to express our reverence for those venerable institutions, which, as forming the pride and boast of our country, he laboured to defend; and which, through their influence on the national spirit, proved the salvation of Europe in the great struggle now happily past. I have the honour to be, Sir,

With much respect,
Your most faithful,
And obedient servant,
Jas. Prior.

CONTENTS.

Page.
PREFACE - - - ix
List of Writings of Mr. Burke - - xvii

CHAPTER I.

Family and Birth of Mr. Burke.—Studies and Poetical Exercises.—Entry at the Middle Temple - 17

CHAPTER II.

First Impressions of London and England generally.—Contemplates an Attempt for the Logic Professorship of Glasgow.—First avowed Publications - 39

CHAPTER III.

Abridgment of English History.—Annual Register.—Acquaintance with Dr. Johnson, Mrs Anne Pitt, Hume, Lord Charlemont, Gerrard Hamilton, Barry, Goldsmith 63

CHAPTER IV.

Appointed Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham.—Success in Parliament.—Gregories.—Pamphlet in Reply to Mr. Grenville.—Junius.—Letters to Barry 90

CHAPTER V.

Page.

Mr. Fox.—Pamphlet on the Discontents.—Parliamentary Business.—Character of the House of Commons.—Speech of the 19th of April, 1774.—Goldsmith.—Barry.—Johnson and Burke.—Election for Bristol - 135

CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Business.—Anecdotes of Drs. Franklin, Priestley, and Mr. Hartley.—Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell.—Letters to the Sheriffs and two Gentlemen of Bristol.—To Lord Charlemont, Barry, Mr. Francis, Dr. Robertson.—Statue proposed in Dublin.—Admiral Keppel - - - 168

CHAPTER VII.

Economical Reform.—Intercedes for mercy towards the Rioters.—Rejection at Bristol.—Opposed to Mr. Fox on the Repeal of the Marriage Act.—Mr. Sheridan.—Change of Ministry - - - 204

CHAPTER VIII.

Appointed Paymaster General.—Lord Shelburn.—Coalition.—India Bill.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Burke elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.—Reception in the new Parliament.—Letter to Miss Shackleton - 234

CHAPTER IX.

Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.—Impeachment of Mr. Hastings.—Visit to Ireland by Mr. Burke.—Mr.

Page.

Hardy's Account of him.—Preface to Bellendenus.—Epitaph on the Marquis of Rockingham - 261

CHAPTER X.

Regency Question.—French Revolution.—Mr. Burke's Opinions immediately formed.—His Correspondents.—Rupture with Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Gerrard Hamilton 292

CHAPTER XI.

Publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France.—Thomas Paine.—Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.—Rupture with Mr. Fox.—Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.—Jury Bill of 1791.—Anecdotes 320

CHAPTER XII.

Writings connected with French Affairs, and the Catholic Claims.—Sir Joshua Reynolds.—Negro Code.—Letter on the Death of Mr. Shackleton.—War.—Conduct of the Minority, and Policy of the Allies.—Letter to Mr. Murphy.—Preface to Brissot's Address - 354

CHAPTER XIII.

Junction of the Old Whigs with Ministry.—Mr. Burke loses his Son, and excessive Grief.—Letters to W. Smith, Esq., to Sir Hercules Langrishe (2d), to W. Elliot, Esq. —Thoughts on Scarcity.—Receives a Pension.—Letter to a Noble Lord.—Letters on a Regicide Peace - 381

CHAPTER XIV.

Page.

Report concerning Mr. Burke.—Decline of his Health.—Letter to Mrs. Leadbeater.—His Death and Disposal of his Residence and Estate.—His Person.—Conversation.—Wit.—Piety.—Moral Character.—Zeal in Public Measures - - - 412

CHAPTER XV.

Contemporary Opinions entertained of Mr. Burke.—His Eloquence.—His Writings.—His Leading Principles as a Statesman.—Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt - 438

PREFACE.

Few things interest the curiosity of mankind more, or prove so instructive in themselves, as to trace the progress of a powerful mind, by the honourable exertion of its native energies, rising in the teeth of difficulties from a very private condition to stations of public eminence and trust, with the power to influence the destiny of nations. Such a person, as sprung not from the privileged few, but from among the mass of the people, we feel to be one of ourselves. Our sympathies go along with him in his career. The young imagine that it may possibly be their own case; the old, that with a little more of the favour of fortune it might have been theirs; and at any rate we are anxious to ascertain the causes of his superiority, to treasure up his experience, to profit by what he experienced to be useful, to avoid what he found to be disadvantageous. And the lesson becomes doubly instructive to that large class of society who are born to be the architects of their own fortune, when it impresses the great moral truth, that natural endowments, however great, receive their highest polish and power, their only secure reward, from diligent study—from continued, unwearied application—a plain, homely faculty, within the reach of all men, one which is certain to wear well, and whose fruits bear testimony to the industry of the possessor, and to the intrinsic value of the possession. Of the great results of such endowments, fostered and directed by such cultivation, we have not a more distinguished example than Edmund Burke.

To an attentive reader of our political and literary history during the sixty years past, no name will more frequently interest him, for the large space he occupied in public esteem, for the original genius he possessed, the diversified talents he displayed, the great events with which the whole of his public life was connected, and the alternate eulogy and abuse with which, particularly since the period of the French Revolution, his name has been assailed.

Two biographies of this remarkable man have been written; one a quarto volume of slander, dictated by the most envenomed party spirit; the other more just to his deserts; but both very deficient in facts, and particularly so as to his earlier life, very little being known or stated of him until his entry into the House of Commons. Obvious as this deficiency is, accident alone suggested to the present writer the attempt to clear up part of this obscurity. Contemplating his qualities and career as very extraordinary and successful, he drew up a character of him at some length, in the autumn of 1819, which being thrown by for above two years without further notice, came then under the examination of a friend, who recommended that it should be enlarged; for that many parts would be obscure to the general reader, many liable to mistake or misapplication, and many nearly unintelligible, if not grounded upon a memoir. This labour was undertaken certainly without regret. Some new materials were already in the writer's hands, and by application to various friends in England and Ireland, a variety of others, chiefly unknown to the world and of undoubted authenticity, were procured; and as illustrative of some of his opinions, and criticisms, and style of correspondence, both of the unceremonious and more formal descriptions, a few of his letters have been added, several of them little or not at all familiar to the public eye.

An extended biography, embracing all his public labours, was not deemed necessary. It may be said, indeed, that to write the life of a great statesman and orator, without giving the substance of his speeches in Parliament, is scarcely to do him justice; and were they to be found no where else, the remark would be just. But these make part of the history of the country; a few of the principal are to be found in his Works, and the remainder, in a very imperfect form indeed, as all such things must be, in the four volumes collected and published by a different editor. And independent of this, the appalling form of a quarto or two, or even three quartos, to which such a design would inevitably extend, was sufficient of itself to deter the writer from such an attempt, bearing in mind the observation of his eminent principal, that "a great book is a great evil." His aim therefore was not to make a great book, but a compact one; to condense within the compass of a single octavo all that was necessary to be known, and which many readers would decline to seek in the more ponderous forms alluded to. In doing this he thought it better simply to allude to his chief parliamentary exertions, rather than to aim at entering into their details.

Great as this eminent man's reputation is, it stands, as far as party feelings are concerned, in rather a singular predicament. It is well known he would not go all lengths with any body of men; that he had an utter abhorrence of any thing resembling arrogant domination from any quarter; and that, by endeavouring to preserve a certain balance of powers in the State, in different orders of the community, and in different interests, religious, political, and commercial of the kingdom, by stepping in to the assistance of the weak against the strong, which is after all the duty of honest patriotism and sound wisdom, he incurred censure from the more violent of every class. He was assailed by the zealots of power for opposing the coercion of America, and for prosecuting Mr. Hastings; by the zealots of licentious freedom, for opposing the French Revolution; by zealots in religion, for advocating the cause of the Dissenters and Roman Catholics; and by other zealots in affairs of less moment.

While therefore the two great divisions in politics, one more especially, think it a kind of duty to endeavour to write down his name for the purpose of exalting others; and a more violent, though small body, known under various harsh and odious appellations, have sworn a kind of eternal enmity to his name for the overthrow of their doctrines at his hands, during the revolutionary fever, no special party remains on whom devolves the business of upholding his fame. Depreciation and abuse from his opponents remain uncontradicted. If he has not written and spoken himself into repute, nobody else perhaps can do it for him: nobody else certainly has attempted it. He is left to the buoyancy of his own merits; to sink or swim by intrinsic powers. "For what I have been," said he, "I put myself upon my country;" and among the educated and dispassionate part of it, he has no reason to complain of the decision. He has worked his way into general esteem, not by the applauding pens of intoxicated followers, but by more eloquent though less noisy advocates; by the slow but steady and sure evolution of public opinion; by the living and speaking evidences to his deserts of a constitution preserved from demolition or inroad, an unshaken throne, an unpolluted altar, an unplundered nobility and gentry, and the preservation of those moral ties and habitudes, which bind together and form the safeguard of the whole.

Misrepresentation, indeed, answers its end for a time. And it is sometimes amusing to observe the ignorance or prejudice respecting Mr. Burke, on public matters, which prevails among many, who, at a venture, attribute to him any thing that happens to be unpopular at the moment—circumstances, in which he had no participation or interest, and principles, which he disclaimed. In this spirit, a Reverend President of a political society at Liverpool, not long ago, stigmatised him as a deserter from the cause of parliamentary reform; more than one of the orators of the Common Council of London repeated the accusation, among others equally accurate; at some of the county meetings he was spoken of as a sinecure placeman, and an enemy to liberty; even at one of the largest book establishments in London, on inquiring for a volume in which it happened to be said there was something concerning him, "A satire, Sir, I suppose," was the reply, as if satire was the legitimate coin with which his public labours deserved to be repaid. In a private company of that rank in society where the writer least expected to hear such observations, his motives in the impeachment of Mr. Hastings were sharply arraigned by some members of what are called the *Indian Interest*, though none of them could assign any thing like an improper motive; in another company less select, he was admitted to be a most surprising man, but unhappily opposed to the reformation of all abuses in government; in a third, he was an ingenious and able writer, but too *flowery* in his style; in a fourth, his political conduct was said to be regulated by regard merely to his own interests; in a fifth, it was a matter of charge that he had no private property—that he took the profits of his literary labours—and at length accepted of a pension: so that, by this ingenious logic, the original sin of want of fortune was not permitted to be remedied, either by the fair exertion of those talents with which Providence had endowed him, or by the public gratitude of his country. All the facts came lately under the eye and ear of the writer; they are samples of what is heard every day; and are only remarkable as coming from men who would have felt not a little indignant at being told they were talking untruths or nonsense.

Another order of persons of more influence and information, chiefly public writers, who have in view to exalt another great political name, think it necessary to their purpose to lower, though indirectly and circuitously, the reputation of Mr. Burke.

From these we hear of him frequently as a man of genius, of brilliant fancy, and amusing talents—carefully keeping out of view, as if they were wholly unknown, those higher and more profound qualities of mind which form his chief claims to distinction. Sometimes again, he is what they call a philosophical politician, meaning something different from a statesman: sometimes he is even admitted to be the greatest writer of the age, though with an utter oblivion of that parliamentary eloquence which made his name, as an orator, more celebrated on the continent of Europe than those of either of his two great rivals; which enabled him to take the lead for many years in the House of Commons; and which drew the then unusual honour of an invitation to represent one of the chief cities in the kingdom. At other times, hints are dropped of how much better his genius would have been exerted otherwise than in politics. This opinion, at best is but mere trifling. We have no right to speculate on what he might have been, but what he was. Added to an early bias towards the pursuit, there is perhaps little doubt but that more of the strength of his mind was put forth by the contentions of politics, than by any other species of discussion. But independent of this, if he has left behind in the track of life which he chose, more for fame than either of his contemporaries; namely, the finest orations in our language, the ablest and most eloquent political disquisitions, the introduction or support of a series of important constitutional measures for nearly thirty years together, and a reputation perhaps above any other for practical wisdom, not resting on mere opinion, but on record in his speeches and writings —surely it savours of impertinence to say he would have succeeded better in any thing else.

It is time that this ungenerous warfare against his fame should cease. No man intimately acquainted with public affairs has indeed been misled by it, as the debates in Parliament almost every night of every session testify; but it has served its turn pretty effectually among that multitude of persons, who, suspecting no artifice, take for granted what is told them, without undergoing the labour of inquiring for themselves. Should the present attempt enable any of these to appreciate more justly the powers of one to whom his country is under very important obligations, the writer will not deem his labour misapplied. His testimony at least is impartial. He has no party purpose to answer; no influence to court; no interest to push; except it be that common interest felt by every generous mind, of rendering to a distinguished and virtuous character those honours which are its due.

List of the chief Writings of the Right Hon. Edmund Burke, *arranged, as nearly as possible, in Chronological Order, with Reference to the Volumes of his Works in which they are contained; several however, though of undoubted Authenticity, are not yet published among his Works.*

It may be necessary to observe, that the speeches, or notes of speeches, enumerated in the following list, are such only as have a place in his Works. Four volumes of them (not in his Works) have been collected and published by a different Editor, which, though necessarily imperfect, as being taken from casual and unauthorised reports, are probably the best than can now be procured.

The letters specified in this list are all upon public affairs, some of them published soon after being written, some not; and the greater number forming pamphlets of very considerable size.

POETRY.

Translation of an Idyllium of Theocritus,	about 1744.
Several Scenes of a Play, on the Subject of Alfred the Great,	ibid.
Ballitore, a short Poem,	1745.
Lines on the River Blackwater,	1745.
Translation of the concluding Portion of the 2d Georgic of Virgil,	1746.
Lines to Mr. Richard Shackleton on his Marriage,	1748.
And several shorter pieces still known to be in existence.	

MISCELLANEOUS.

		In what vol. contained.
Hints for an Essay on the Drama,	about 1754.	x
Vindication of Natural Society,	1756.	I
Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful,	1756.	I
An account of the European Settlements in America, 2 vols. 8 vo.	1757.	
Essay towards an Abridgment of English History, from the Invasion of Julius Cæsar to the End of the Reign of King John,	1757.	x
*Annual Register—at first the whole Work, afterwards only the Historical Article,	1758, &c.	

---

* Doubts being still expressed of his participation in this publication, fac-similes of his hand-writing of the receipts for the copy-money of 1761, alluded to at page 67, is appended to this list.

		In what vol. contained.
Fragments of a Tract (75 8vo. Pages) on the Popery Laws of Ireland,	1761.	IX
Short Account of a late Short Administration,	1766.	II
Humorous Reply to the preceding, signed Whittington, a Tallow-chandler, of Cateaton-street; and Ship News for 1766; both believed to be Mr. Burke's,	1766.	
Observations on a late Publication, intituled the Present State of the Nation,	1769.	II
Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents,	1770.	II
Notes of a Speech on the Middlesex Election,	Feb. 1771.	X
———————— a Bill for explaining the Powers of Juries in Prosecutions for Libel,	March, 1771.	X
Letter on the same subject for the Newspapers,	1771.	X
Notes of a Speech on the Acts of Uniformity,	Feb. 1772.	X
———————— on a Bill to Quiet the possessions of the Subject against Dormant Claims of the Church,	Feb. 1772.	X
Notes of a Speech for the Relief of certain Protestestant Dissenters,	1773.	X
———————— on a bill for shortening the Duration of Parliament,	1773.	X
Letter on the Irish Absentee Tax, to Sir Charles Bingham,	Oct. 1773.	XI
Speech on American Taxation,	April 1774.	II
Speeches at Bristol,	Nov. 1774.	III
Speech on American Conciliation,	March 1775.	III
Letter to the Marquis of Rockingham on the proposed Secession from Parliament, of Members who opposed the American War,	Jan. 1777.	IX
Address to the King—Address to the British Colonists in North America—both on the same subject,	1777.	IX
Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol,	April 1777.	III
Letter to the Hon. C. J. Fox, on Political Affairs,	Oct. 1777.	IX
Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell,	1778.	
Two Letters to Gentlemen at Bristol, on Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland,	April and May 1778.	III
Letter to the Right Hon. Edmund Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, on a Bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics of Ireland,	July 1778.	IX
Letters to Thomas Burgh, Esq. in Vindication of the Author's Parliamentary Conduct relative to the Affairs of Ireland,	Jan. 1780.	IX
Speech on Œconomical Reform,	Feb. 1780.	III

		In what vol. contained.
Letter to John Merlott, Esq. on the Affairs of Ireland,	April 1780.	IX
Letter to the Chairman of the Buckinghamshire Meeting, for procuring Parliamentary Reform,	April 1780.	IX
Sketch of a Code of Laws for the Regulation of the Slave Trade, and the Government of the Negroes in the West India Islands,	1780.	IX
Letters and Reflections on the Execution of the Rioters,	July 1780.	IX
Speeches at Bristol,	Sept. 1780.	III
Notes of a Speech on the Marriage Act,	June 1781.	X
Letter to Lord Kenmare on the Penal Laws against the Roman Catholics of Ireland,	Feb. 1782.	VI
Notes of a Speech on a Motion for Reform in the Representation of the Commons,	May 1782.	X
Ninth Report from a Committee of the House of Commons on the Administration of Justice in the Provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa,	June 1783.	XI
Eleventh Report from the same—both intended probably to pave the way for the India Bill,	1783.	XI
Speech on the East India Bill,	Decemb. 1783.	IV
Representation to his Majesty, moved	June 14th, 1784.	IV
Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's debts,	Feb. 1785.	IV
Articles of charge of High Crimes and Misdemeanors against Warren Hastings, Esq. late Governor General of Bengal,	April, 1786.	XI and XII
Epitaph upon, or Character of, the Marquis of Rockingham,	1787.	
Speeches on the opening of the Impeachment of Mr. Hastings, February 15th, 16th, 17th, 19th, occupying about four hours each day,	1788.	XIII
Speeches on the Sixth Article of Charge, April 21st, 25th, May 5th, and 7th,	1789.	XIII and XIV
A variety of Letters and Papers (public) on the Regency Question,	1788, 1789.	
Letters to M. Menonville on the French Revolution,	Oct. 1789.	
Substance of a Speech on the Army Estimates,	Feb. 1790.	V
Reflections on the Revolution in France,	Oct. 1790.	V
Character of Henry IV. of France,	Jan. 1791.	
Letter to a Member of the National Assembly,	Jan. 1791.	VI
Hints for a Memorial to M. Montmorin,	Feb. 1791.	VII
Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs,	July 1791.	VI
Letter to the Empress of Russia,	Nov. 1791.	IX
Thoughts on French Affairs,	Dec. 1791.	VII

		In what vol. contained.
Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart. M. P. on the Subject of the Roman Catholics of Ireland,	Jan. 1792.	VI
Character of Sir Joshua Reynolds,	Feb. 1792.	
Notes of a Speech on the Unitarian Petition,	May 1792.	X
Appeal to public benevolence in favour of the destitute French Clergy,	Sept. 1722.	
Heads for consideration on the Present State of Affairs,	Novemb. 1792.	VII
Letter to Richard Burke, Esq. (his son) on the subject of the Popery Laws of Ireland,	1793.	IX
Observations on the conduct of the Minority in the last Session of Parliament,	August 1793.	VII
Remarks on the policy of the Allies,	Oct. 1793.	VII
Preface to a Translation of the Address of M. Brissot to his Constituents,	1794.	VII
Report from the Committee appointed to inspect the Lords' Journals relative to their proceeding on the trial of Warren Hastings, Esq.:—ordered on the 5th and 17th of March, and this important and elaborate paper of nearly 200 octavo pages, was produced by Mr. Burke,	30th April 1794.	XIV
Letter to William Smith, Esq. M. P. (now one of the Barons of the Court of Exchequer, in Ireland,) on the subject of the Popery Laws,	Jan. 1795.	IX
Second Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart., on the same subject,	May 1795.	IX
Letter to William Elliott, Esq., occasioned by a Speech in the House of Lords by the * * * of * * * (Duke of Norfolk,)	May 1795.	VII
Letter to the Right Hon. Lord Auckland,	Oct. 1795.	IX
Thoughts and Details on Scarcity,	Nov. 1795.	VII
Letter from the Right Hon. Edmund Burke to a noble Lord (Earl Fitzwilliam,) on the Attacks made upon him and his pension, in the House of Lords, by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale,	1796.	VIII
Three Letters an a Regicide Peace,	1796.	VIII
Fourth Letter on the same subject,	1797.	IX
Letter on the Affairs of Ireland,	1797.	IX

Two more octavo volumes are to be filled by the concluding or summing-up oration, on the impeachment, which Mr. Burke commenced on the 28th of May, 1794, and continued for nine days.

CHAPTER I.

Family and Birth of Mr. Burke.—Studies and Poetical Exercises.—Entry at the Middle Temple.

EDMUND BURKE, the most extraordinary man perhaps of his age, and certainly so of his country, was descended from a respectable family, long settled in the county of Limerick, in Ireland, and enjoying a considerable estate there, but forfeited during one of those civil convulsions which have so often caused property to change possessors in that country. This took place about 1641.

His great grandfather retired to a small estate which still remained to him, adjoining to the village of Castletown Roche, in the county of Cork, about four miles from Donneraile, five or six from Mallow, and something more from the old castle of Killmacleny, once the residence, though now in ruins, of the poet Spenser; and where he wrote part of his Fairy Queen; the superstitions, scenery, and romantic traditions of that part of the country supplying him unquestionably with numberless hints for that great work. This property continuing in the Burke family, came into the possession of Edmund in 1765, on the death of his elder brother Garrett, who died on the 27th of April in that year, and lies buried on the spot; it was sold by him in 1792 or 1793, for something less than 4000*l.*; the annual value at that period was under 300*l.* but of late it has produced above 700*l.* per annum.

His father, Richard Burke, or Bourke, as the name was originally spelt, and as many families, particularly that of the Earl of Mayo (the founder of which was also a Richard Bourke, LLD. who died in 1727) still spell it, was a protestant, and educated for an attorney. Removing to Dublin, he took a house on Arran Quay, then a fashionable part of the town, and soon obtaining extensive practice, continued for several years at the head of his profession in that city. He had become attached at an early period to a juvenile acquaintance, a Miss Nagle, of the respectable family of that name still existing, near Castletown Roche; one member of which, the present admiral, Sir Edmund Nagle, enjoyed, in his naval career, the active patronage and friendship of his celebrated kinsman, spending much of his time when not on service at Beaconsfield, and frequently calling forth his praise by his gallantry, particularly on one occasion, when Edmund said he deserved a civic crown for jumping overboard, from a ship at sea, to save a friend from the jaws of a shark.*

By this lady, to whom he was married, at Mallow, about 1726, Mr. Burke had fourteen or fifteen children, all of whom died young, except Garrett, Edmund, Richard, and a sister named Julia, baptised 1728, afterwards married to a gentleman of consideration, named French.

---

* This circumstance being much talked of at the time, his late Majesty heard of it, and Sir Edmund, then Captain Nagle being pointed out, he entered into conversation, complimenting him upon his gallantry: "It was a hazardous attempt, Captain Nagle," observed the King. "I never thought of the hazard, please your Majesty." "But do you think you would run such a risk again, Captain Nagle?" "Please your Majesty, I would go to h—ll at any time to serve a friend!" replied the gallant seaman.

Garrett, who followed his father's profession, and was well known in Dublin as a man of wit and drollery, died unmarried. Richard, who became equally distinguished in London as a wit, a politician, a writer, and a lawyer, in which latter capacity Lord Mansfield had formed and expressed to several members of the bar now living the highest opinion of him, and of whom some notices will hereafter occur, also died unmarried. The issue of Mrs. French alone survive; Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, her grandson, being the lineal representative of the family. The integrity and reputation of their father enabled him, after living in affluence, and educating his children in a suitable manner, to leave behind at his death a competent provision for them. It is a fact, ascertained by the writer, from the most unquestionable authority, that Edmund acquired from his family, at various times, a sum little short of 20,000*l.*; which is more than Mr. Pitt derived from his father; though it has been industriously circulated that the patrimony of the former amounted to little or nothing, and that in early life he supported himself in London wholly by his pen.

He was born in the house on Arran Quay, January 1st, O. S. 1730: those who are fond of looking to coincidences will not fail to remark from what has been already said, that, like his great contemporaries, Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, he was a younger son. Scarcely any thing is remembered of his early years, except being of a delicate constitution, tending, as was believed, to consumption. On this account he was kept longer than usual under the paternal roof; and it is traditionally related as something remarkable and even ludicrous, that the first instructor in the rudiments of learning of this great master of the powers of the English language, was an elderly woman residing in the neighbourhood, who entertaining a partiality for the boy, found amusement in the business of forming his infant mind.

The air of the metropolis being deemed detrimental to his constitution from not improving in strength, he was removed to his grandfather's at Castletown Roche. Here for the first time he was put to school; and the ruins of the school-room, or what is believed to have been such, may be still traditionally pointed out to those who take an interest in prying into those early haunts which subsequent great genius elevates into immortality. At this place he spent a considerable time, so much, it is said, as five years, acquiring all that the village schoolmaster could teach; and the partiality which he always entertained for the spot, in addition to his long residence in it, and familiarity with the neighbouring objects, particularly Spenser's ruined castle, gave rise to the belief of his having been born there. In Ireland this report is particularly current, on account of the spot being deemed classical ground. It was countenanced also by some beautiful lines which he wrote at college, on the river Blackwater, running to Youghall Bay, through the counties of Cork and Waterford, near to the spot where he resided, and into which falls the *Molla*, a stream immortalised by the author of the Fairy Queen.

Several other places have equally, though incorrectly, contended for the honour of his birth, at least in the gossiping rumours of their respective natives; such as Athlone: Thurles in the county of Tipperary; the county of Carlow adjoining to Kildare; and the vicinity of Lismore. Something of this uncertainty is due to that unhappy neglect which Ireland too often exhibits towards her eminent men; something to Mr. Burke himself, who, from disregard of contemporary applause, or that unusual humility with which he was well known to regard himself and his exertions, never willingly obtruded his name into the magazines and newspapers of the day, nor would he furnish materials for such purpose to his friends. The consequence is, there is less known of him than of any other public man of the time, who had not half his desert or half his reputation. Some particulars, in fact, are still unknown even to his most intimate acquaintance, and are likely to continue so.

From Castletown Roche he was removed to Dublin, and is said to have continued about a year at school in Smithfield, in that city, when the reputation of the classical academy at Ballitore, and the improvement of his health, further impaired by rapid growth, induced his father to send him thither.

This village stands on an agreeable scite in the county of Kildare, 28 miles to the southward of Dublin, in a valley through which runs the small river Griese,—a prolific theme for school-boy punning. The scite was purchased early in the last century by two of the Society of Friends, John Barcroft and Amos Strettel, as a species of colony for its members, and the chief inhabitants are still of that persuasion. A school of a superior class being wanting among this intelligent community, an honest and learned Quaker, Abraham Shackleton, was invited from Yorkshire, in 1726, to conduct it, whose capacity and diligence soon spread the reputation of the establishment over much of the southern and eastern parts of Ireland, by turning out from it several eminent men. It was continued by his son Richard Shackleton; by his grandson Abraham, who died in 1818; both men of superior original minds, and poetical powers; and still exists with undiminished reputation under the direction of the son-in-law of the latter, Mr. James White. The grand-daughter of the founder, Mrs. Mary Leadbeater, inherits the genius of her family, and is advantageously known to the public by a volume of "Poems," published in 1808; "The Landlord's Friend;" "Cottage Biography;" "Cottage Dialogues;" the latter work introduced to the world under the warm sanction of Miss Edgeworth, and with the others, imparting the most faithful views we possess of the interior of an Irish cottage, and the manners of that peculiar and in many respects original people.

To this school Edmund, then in his 12th year, along with his brothers Garret and Richard, was removed the 26th May, 1741. It has been observed by Dr. Johnson, that the early years of distinguished men, when minutely traced, furnish evidence of the same vigour or originality of mind by which they are celebrated in after-life. Such was certainly the case with young Burke.

His habits, so far as can be remembered, indicated more of solidity than commonly belongs to that period of life; his powers appeared not so much in brilliancy, as in steadiness of application, facility of comprehension, and strength of memory; indications which drew the commendation first, and, as his powers unfolded themselves, soon the warm regard of the master under whose paternal care the improvement of his health kept pace with that of his mind; and the grateful pupil never forgot his obligations.

Among his schoolfellows were Dr. Brocklesby, the physician, afterwards so well known in the literary circles of London; the Rev. Michael Kearney, brother to a Bishop of Ossory, a modest and most ingenious man, of great literary acquirements and endowments of mind, who died in 1814 at a very advanced age; Thomas Bushe, father to the present Irish judge of that name; and several others of equal talents, though filling inferior stations in life, among whom was a Mr. Matthew Smith, a country school-master, who possessed his esteem, and with whom he corresponded. Another, who was still less fortunate in life, he kept for some years domesticated in his establishment at Beaconsfield, and tried repeatedly to push forward in the world. Dr. Sleigh, an eminent physician of Cork, the friend of Goldsmith in more than one season of adversity, and the first friend of Barry, the painter, did not come to the school till Mr. Burke had quitted it, but they met in London afterwards, and became intimately acquainted, the latter frequently saying, "he knew few more ingenious and valuable men."

But his chief favourite and friend was Richard Shackleton, the only son of his master, and his successor in the school, with whom a lively epistolary correspondence was kept up during the remainder of his life; whom he never failed to visit when he went to Ireland; who sometimes came to England to spend a short time at Beaconsfield with him; and for whose death in 1792, he expressed, in a very affectionate letter to the family, the most sincere regret, confessing to the shedding of tears on the occasion.

This gentleman, who felt an equal degree of attachment to his illustrious acquaintance, being often questioned during his life as to the boyish peculiarities of the great Burke, seemed to feel much interest in recounting them. To an intimate friend of his, to whom I am obliged for the communication of these and several other particulars, he was accustomed to give the following summary from personal observation, which, being three or four years older, he was enabled to do with sufficient accuracy; and as they are, perhaps, the only authentic notices which remain of the period in question, possess some little interest for those who love to trace back great talents from maturity to the bud.

His genius, observed Mr. Shackleton, appeared to be promising from the first; he was not very far advanced when he came to school, but soon evinced great aptitude to learn; and on many occasions a soundness and manliness of mind, and ripeness of judgment beyond his years. He read much while quite a boy, accumulated a great variety of knowledge, and delighted in exercising, and occasionally exhibiting to his companions, superior powers of memory, particularly in what is called *capping* Latin verses. An inquisitive and speculative cast of mind were not the least distinguishing of his peculiarities; he devoted much time to the eager perusal of history and poetry; the study of the classics seemed to be more his diversion than his business. He was of an affectionate disposition, rather fond of being alone, less lively and bustling than other boys of the same age, but good-natured, communicative of what he knew, and always willing to teach or to learn.

In the family of this gentleman are preserved a series of his letters, at least a considerable number of them, commencing at the age of fifteen, down to within two months of his death; and the earliest said to be distinguished by as strong a love of virtue, affection for his friend, and superior capacity for observation, as the last. To these the writer, from some family objection, has not been permitted to have access; but the same friend to whom Mr. Shackleton communicated the substance of some of them, as well as the specimens of young Burke's poetical powers which appear in the present volume, has favoured him with some of the circumstances to which they refer.

Few anecdotes of him, while at school, are preserved. It is recorded, however, that seeing a poor man pulling down his own hut near the village, and hearing that it was done by order of a great gentleman in a gold-laced hat (the parish conservator of the roads,) upon the plea of being too near the highway, the young philanthropist, his bosom swelling with indignation, exclaimed, that, were he a man, and possessed of authority, the poor should not thus be oppressed. Little things in children often tend to indicate, as well as to form, the mind of the future man; there was no characteristic of his subsequent life more marked, than a hatred of oppression in any form, or from any quarter.

The steward of the establishment at Ballitore, who sometimes condescended to be director of the school-boy sports, used to repeat this and similar anecdotes, with no little pride of his old acquaintance when risen into celebrity. He delighted in hearing of him; he would sit for hours attentive to this his favourite theme; and particularly when the newspapers had any thing of more than usual interest respecting him to communicate, he was quite insensible to all other claims upon his attention. He was a hard-headed, North-of-Ireland presbyterian, named Gill, upon whom young Shackleton wrote verses, and young Burke chopped his boyish logic; the shrewd, though unlettered remarks in reply to which, gave him in their opinion some claim to the more philosophical appellation of Hobbes. By this name Mr. Burke used to inquire after him while at college; and never afterwards went to Ballitore, where he chiefly continued to reside, without giving him proofs of regard.

The last visit he made took place in 1786, after the opening of the impeachment of Mr. Hastings. The old steward, who regarded this as another illustration of the humane spirit displayed by the boy, was then verging to eighty, his eyes dim, his limbs feeble, and as it proved, tottering into the grave; but the announcement of the name of his youthful associate inspired the worn-out frame of the aged man with momentary vigour. Mr. Burke accosted him with his accustomed kindness, shook him often and cordially by the hand, and introduced his son, who showed equal attention to his father's humble but venerable friend. This condescension so much affected the old man's feelings, that for some time he was deprived of utterance; he bowed repeatedly, and at length brought out, that he was proud—very proud to see him—adding, "you have many friends in Ireland, sir." "I am happy Mr. Gill, that you are one of them.—You look very well.—Am I much changed since you last saw me?" Old William replied, after some attempt at examination, that he was almost too dark with age to observe; when Mr. Burke, with characteristic affability, took a candle and held it up to his own face, to give the aged servant a better view of it; a scene which the relator of the anecdote says, those who were present cannot easily forget.*

A spirit of emulation with his friend Shackleton, and natural taste together, made young Burke towards the close of his school career, if not a poet, at least poetical; though few, if any, of his verses of this date are known to exist. It was about this period, however, immediately before or after quitting school, that in a spirit of friendly rivalry they each translated the thirtieth Idyllium of Theocritus on the death of Adonis, reported to have possessed considerable merit. Some scenes of a play are also attributed to him about the same time, which were either lost or destroyed while on a visit to a relation residing at Ballyduff, near Thurles, in the county of Tipperary.

---

* Poems, by Mary Leadbeater (late Shackleton), 1808.—Cottage Biography, 1822, by the same.

At Ballitore also he is believed to have imbibed other and more distinguished characteristics; particularly that regard for civil and religious liberty which marked his future life; and this from observing among the society of *Friends*, in which he was domesticated, that differences of opinion on these points made neither worse subjects nor worse men. Reflection, and the remembrance that many relations by both parents were Roman catholics, probably taught him to extend the same liberality of sentiment toward persons of that persuasion, then in a most oppressed and persecuted state. His opinions on this point are known to have been formed soon; and the fact exhibits an additional proof of early maturity of mind, in possessing the power to disengage itself from those prejudices and animosities existing in Ireland between protestant and catholic, at a time when, even among the nearest relations, they produced an unchristian, and, in fact, a hostile spirit.

Toward the middle of April, 1744, having been just three years at school, he quitted it, possessed of what Mr. Shackleton used to describe as "a large and miscellaneous stock of learning for his years," and next day, as he informed that gentleman by letter, entered Trinity college, Dublin, as pensioner, the expense of which is about 150*l*. per annum, that of fellow commoner, the highest class of students, being about 200*l*. The following is the entry in the register; premising that there is a mistake of a year in his age, possibly done by design, sixteen being the usual time of admission; and that the academical year beginning in July, the year is really 1744, though nominally a year sooner; his name also is spelt according to the orthography of the other branches of the family.

1743,*

April 14.	Edmund Bourke, Pens.	Fil. Ric. Generos.	Annum Agens 16.	Natus Dublin.	Educatus Sub ferula Mag. Shackleton	Dr. Pelissier.

Dr. Pelissier, who had the honour of having such a pupil, is represented by high college authority as a man of very ordinary acquirements, who when vice-provost in 1753, quitted the university for the living of Ardstraw, in the north of Ireland. To him Mr. Burke owed few obligations, except, as it is said, having recommended to him the acquisition of multiform knowledge, rather than to devote his attention to any particular branch,—a plan which looking to the results as exemplified in the instances of Johnson and Burke, would seem not to be the worst for enlarging and strengthening the human faculties.

The university course, besides abstract christianity; the usual portion of mathematics, theoretical and practical; natural, moral, and political philosophy; dealt deeply in several old and rather uninstructive volumes of scholastic logic, fortified however by Locke on the understanding; Burlamaqui and Locke were the chief writers on government, the latter of which has since been expunged from the list of college books. In classics the course comprehended all the chief Greek and Latin authors. Composition in those languages however is more neglected than in the English universities, the attention of the student in Dublin, as in Scotland, being directed more to a perfect acquaintance with their sentiments and beauties than to the niceties of grammar and idiom; an omission which the former learned bodies deem of more importance than perhaps it really is.

A general belief has prevailed, that, like Johnson, Swift,

---

* For the entry I am indebted to John Colhoun, Esq. of the Irish bar.

Goldsmith, and other eminent men, Mr. Burke attracted no particular notice, and exhibited at college no proofs of that superiority for which he was afterwards so celebrated. This may be partly true. Goldsmith, who was his contemporary, at least said so, more than once, in order perhaps to apologise for his own negligence; but Dr. Leland, who was then a fellow of the college, and necessarily a more competent judge, used to say that he was known as a young man of superior, but unpretending talents, and more anxious to acquire knowledge than to display it. Other evidence also exists that he did not pass among the crowd wholly undistinguished. In June, 1746, he was elected a scholar of the house; the qualification for which, being a successful examination in the classics before the provost, and senior fellows, confers a superior degree of reputation through life in that branch of learning on him who succeeds; and as candidates are not eligible till the third year of residence in the university, it will be observed, by referring to dates, that he obtained this distinction the moment the regulations permitted: the advantages of it, which continue for five years, are chambers and commons free, a small annuity, and a vote for the member for the university. In addition to this, the writer has seen one of his prize books presented to him by the college for proficiency in the classics in 1745, a year before he was elected scholar.

It has been repeatedly said, like many other erroneous statements concerning this eminent man, that he quitted the university without a degree; the contrary is the fact. He commenced A. B. February 1747-1748, and proceeded A. M. 1751. No academical irregularities have been laid to his charge, except if this can be called so, a participation with his fellow collegians in supporting Mr. Sheridan, father to the late celebrated Brinsley Sheridan, then manager of the Dublin theatre, in the famous riot in 1746, against a party who nearly destroyed the house, and drove him from the Irish stage; to the punishment of the delinquents Mr. Burke alludes in a letter to his friend Shackleton of this year.

His favourite studies, if college report may be trusted, were classics, history, philosophy, general literature, and from the speculative turn before alluded to, a pretty strong attachment to metaphysics; at least so far as they go toward clearing the judgment and strengthening the understanding, but no further; this pursuit, however, he afterwards relinquished, convinced, as he said, that it was of doubtful utility, tending neither to make men better nor happier, but rather the reverse. His opinions, both of many of our own and of the ancient writers, were formed at an early period; admiring more especially those which imparted the greatest knowledge of human nature, of the springs of human motives and human actions, and an acquaintance with human manners; and on this principle used not only to observe, "that a good novel was a good book," but frequently to amuse the social fire-side, particularly the ladies, by perusing a few of the most celebrated; adopting fully the sentiment of Pope, that man is the proper study of man.

Bacon's essays he read diligently, and always characterised them as the greatest works of that great man. Shakspeare, Addison, Le Sage, Fielding, and Smollett, then a new writer, were his constant companions in every interval from graver studies; Richardson, contrary to the opinion of Johnson, he thought much inferior to Fielding as a describer of human nature. Demosthenes was his favourite orator; Plutarch's writings he professed, in a letter to a friend at this time, to admire beyond those of any other; he preferred Euripides to Sophocles among the dramatists; and the Greek historians generally to the Latin. Of Horace, Lucretius, and Virgil, he was particularly fond; maintaining the superiority of the Æneid as a poem over the Iliad, while he admitted the general excellence of Homer's genius in invention, force, and sublimity, over that of Virgil.

In this estimate of the two poems, in which few critics agree with him, something may be owing to a keen relish for the superior taste and elegance of the Roman poet; something to the greater prevalence of the Latin language in Ireland (as in Scotland) than the Greek; something to the general enthusiasm felt there almost universally for Virgil in particular; and something perhaps to the critic's early attempts to give detached portions of this favourite writer an English poetical dress.

Though accused, by that party animosity which ever clings to a great English statesman as if it were a condition of his existence, of innumerable other offences, Mr. Burke has scarcely ever been suspected of the sin of poetry. For while some have expressed surprise that a man of such brilliant and seemingly kindred genius, should not have made the attempt, others did not hesitate to assert that he was unequal to it; and several of his acquaintance, and even biographers, believed and have stated that he never wrote a line in his life. Even Cumberland, who had known him since 1760, in his own memoirs, written so recently as 1805, assigns Mr. Burke's unacquaintance with the practice of writing poetry, as the reason why, in the general endeavour by the club at St. James's coffee-house, in 1774, to make jocular epitaphs upon Goldsmith, he did not take up his pen.

The following therefore may be esteemed a curiosity; it is a translation by Mr. Burke, while at college in 1746, of the conclusion of the second Georgic of Virgil, the panegyric on a country life; and as the production of a youth just turned of sixteen, is not merely no ordinary effort, but in many passages may contest the palm with Dryden; in fact, a comparison of the whole will tell little, if any thing, to his disadvantage.

   Oh! happy swains! did they know how to prize
The many blessings rural life supplies;
Where in safe huts from clattering arms afar,
The pomp of cities and the din of war,
Indulgent earth, to pay his labouring hand,
Pours in his arms the blessings of the land;
Calm through the valleys flows along his life,
He knows no danger, as he knows no strife.
What! though no marble portals, rooms of state,
Vomit the cringing torrent from his gate,
Though no proud purple hang his stately halls,
Nor lives the breathing brass along his walls,
Though the sheep clothe him without colours' aid,
Nor seeks he foreign luxury from trade,
Yet peace and honesty adorn his days
With rural riches and a life of ease.
   Joyous the yell'wing fields here Ceres sees,
Here blushing clusters bend the groaning trees,
Here spreads the silver lake, and all around
Perpetual green, and flow'rs adorn the ground.
   How happy too, the peaceful rustic lies,
The grass his bed, his canopy the skies;
From heat retiring to the noon-tide glade,
His trees protect him with an ample shade;
No jarring sounds invade his settling breast,
His lowing cows shall lull him into rest.
Here 'mong the caves, the woods, and rocks around,
Here, only here, the hardy youth abound;
Religion here has fix'd her pure abodes,
Parents are honour'd, and adored the gods;
Departing justice, when she fled mankind,
In these blest plains her footsteps left behind.
   Celestial Nine! my only joy and care,
Whose love inflames me, and whose rites I bear,
Lead me, oh lead me! from the vulgar throng,
Clothe nature's myst'ries in thy rapturous song;

What various forms in heav'n's broad belt appear,
Whose limits bound the circle of the year,
Or spread around in glitt'ring order lie,
Or roll in mystic numbers through the sky?
What dims the midnight lustre of the moon?
What cause obstructs the sun's bright rays at noon?
Why haste his fiery steeds so long to lave
Their splendid chariot in the wintry wave?
Or why bring on the lazy moon so slow?
What love detains them in the realms below?
But if this dull, this feeble breast of mine,
Can't reach such heights, or hold such truths divine,
Oh! may I seek the rural shades alone,
Of half mankind unknowing and unknown,
Range by the borders of the silver flood,
And waste a life ingloriously good.
Hail! blooming fields, where joy unclouded reigns,
Where silver Sperchius laves the yellowing plains;
Oh! where, Taygeta, shall I here around
Lyæus praise the Spartan virgins sound?
What god will bear me from this burning heat,
In Hæmus' valley, to some cool retreat,
Where oaks and laurels guard the sacred ground,
And with their ample foliage shade me round?
Happy the man, who versed in Nature's laws,
From known effects can trace the hidden cause!
Him not the terrors of the vulgar fright
The vagrant forms and terrors of the night;
Black and relentless fate he tramples on,
And all the rout of greedy Acheron.
Happy whose life the rural god approves,
The guardian of his growing flocks and groves;
Harmonius Pan and old Sylvanus join
The sister nymphs, to make his joys divine;
Him not the splendours of a crown can please,
Or consul's honours bribe to quit his ease
Though on his will should crowding armies wait,
And suppliant kings come suing to his gate;
No piteous objects here his peace molest,
Nor can he sorrow while another's blest;
His food alone what bounteous nature yields,
From bending orchards and luxuriant fields,
Pleased he accepts, nor seeks the mad resort
Of thronging clients and litigious court.
Let one delight all danger's forms to brave,
Rush on the sword, or plunge amid the wave,

Destroy all nations with an easy mind,
And make a general havoc of his kind,
That on a Tyrian couch he may recline,
And from a costlier goblet quaff his wine;
Another soul is buried with his store,
Hourly he heaps, and hourly longs for more;
Some in the rostrum fix their sole delight,
Some in the applauses of a rich third night;
While gain smiles lovely in another's eyes,
Though brother's blood should buy the horrid prize;
Though from his country guilt should make him run,
Where other nations feel another sun.
The happy rustic turns the fruitful soil,
And hence proceeds the year's revolving toil;
On this his country for support depends,
On this his cattle, family, and friends;
For this the bounteous gods reward his care,
With all the product of the various year;
His youngling flocks now whiten all the plain,
Now sink the furrows with the teeming grain;
Beauteous to these Pomona adds her charms,
And pours her fragrant treasures in his arms,
From loaden boughs, the orchard's rich produce,
The mellow apple and the generous juice.
Now winter's frozen hand benumbs the plain.
The winter too has blessings for the swain;
His grunting herd is fed without his toil,
His groaning presses overflow with oil;
The languid autumn crown'd with yellow leaves,
With bleeding fruit and golden-bearded sheaves.
Her various products scatters o'er the land,
And rears the horn of Plenty in her hand.
Nor less than these, wait his domestic life,
His darling children, and his virtuous wife,
The day's long absence they together mourn,
Hang on his neck, and welcome his return;
The cows, departing from the joyful field,
Before his door their milky tribute yield,
While on the green, the frisky kids engage,
With adverse horns and counterfeited rage.
He too, when mark'd with white the festal day,
Devotes his hours to rural sport and play;
Stretch'd on the green amid the jovial quire,
Of boon companions that surround the fire,
With front enlarged he crowns the flowing bowl.
And calls thee, Bacchus, to inspire his soul;

Now warm'd with wine, to vigorous sports they rise ;
High on an elm is hung the victor's prize ;
To him 'tis given, whose force with greatest speed
Can wing the dart, or urge the fiery steed.
Such manners made the ancient Sabines bold,
Such the life led by Romulus of old ;
By arts like these divine Etruria grows,
From such foundations mighty Rome arose,
Whose god-like fame the world's vast circuit fills,
Who with one wall hath circled seven vast hills ;
Such was, ere Jove began his iron reign,
Ere mankind feasted upon oxen slain,
The life that Saturn and his subjects led,
Ere from the land offended justice fled ;
As yet the brazen use of arms unknown,
And anvils rung with scithes and shares alone.

In addition to this and the version of the Idyllium of Theocritus already mentioned, Mr. Burke made not only other translations, but wrote original pieces, some of them of length. A few of the shorter ones were submitted to the inspection of Mr. Shackleton, or directly addressed to him on temporary circumstances ; several of them reported to be juvenile enough ; others to display talent, and an ardent love of virtue ; but the major part believed to be now irrecoverably lost. Conjointly, they wrote a poem, taking Ballitore for the subject. The address before noticed, to the river Blackwater, which was considered to possess superior merit, was, with several letters written by Mr. Burke during the early part of his career in London, borrowed by his father from Mr. Shackleton, and never returned.

One other memorial of him, however, is preserved in the following lines, owing probably to the kind care of the gentleman to whom they were addressed ; and they will be read with interest as the production of a pen so universally celebrated for its powers in prose.

To Richard Shackleton, on his Marriage.

Written by Mr. Burke, 1748.

When hearts are barter'd for less precious gold,
And like the heart, the venal song is sold;
Each flame is dull, and but one base desire
Kindles the bridal torch and poet's fire;
The gods their violated rites forbear,
The Muse flies far, and Hymen is not there.
But when true love binds in his roseate bands
That rare but happy union, hearts and hands—
When nought but friendship guides the poet's song,
How sweet the verse! the happy love how strong!
Oh! if the Muse, indulging my design,
Should favour me, as love has favour'd thine,
I'd challenge Pan at peril of my life,
Though his Arcadia were to judge the strife.
Why don't the vocal groves ring forth their joy
And lab'ring echoes all their mouths employ?
To tell his bride, what sighs, what plaints they heard,
While yet his growing flame's success he fear'd,
And all his pains o'erpaid with transport now,
When love exults and he enjoys his vow?
Silent ye stand--nor will bestow one lay
Of all he taught to grace this happy day;
Can joy ne'er harbour in your sullen shade,
Or are ye but for lover's sorrows made?
I'll leave you then, and from the Bride's bright eye,
A happier omen take which cannot lie,
Of growing time, still growing in delight,
Of rounds of future years all mark'd with white,
Through whose bright circles, free from envious chance,
Concord and love shall lead an endless dance.
What is the monarch's crown, the shepherd's ease,
The hero's laurel, and the poet's bays?
A load of toilsome life too dull to bear,
If heav'n's indulgence did not add the fair;
E'en Eden's sweets our Adam did despise,
All its gay scenes could not delight his eyes,
Woman God gave, and then 'twas Paradise.
Another Eve and Paradise are thine,
May'st thou be father of as long a line!

Your heart so fix'd on her, and hers on you,
As if the world afforded but the two,
That to this age your constancy may prove,
There yet remains on earth a power call'd love.
  These to my friend, in lays not vainly loud,
The palm, unknowing to the giddy crowd
I sung, for these demand his steady truth,
And friendship growing from our earliest youth;
A nobler lay unto his sire should grow,
To whose kind care my better birth I owe,
Who to fair science did my youth entice,
Won from the paths of ignorance and vice.

Things of this description are not constructed to withstand the wintry winds of rigid criticism, yet it is one of the best of the kind; the thoughts chiefly original, the versification harmonious, the expression only in a few places faulty, and the allusions, as has been remarked of his speeches, and even colloquial pleasantries, classical.

That acquaintance with history which distinguished his future life, and which there is no doubt tended to the development of much of his political wisdom, was probably fostered by attendance on occasional meetings of the incipient Historical Society; an association of the students of Trinity college, much celebrated in Ireland, and where some of her greatest men first gave promise of their future fame. It was formally established and countenanced by authority, says the eminent Dr. Elrington, in a communication with which the writer has been favoured, in 1770, suppressed and again resumed in 1794, and finally put down by the heads of the college in 1815; being supposed to direct the attention of youth more than was desirable toward political subjects.

That a similar association had this effect upon young Burke, his friends generally believe. His first efforts as a politician, adds the highest college authority, were made in 1749, previous to his quitting the university, in some letters against the intemperate conduct and writings (by pushing his doctrines to their ultimate results, as he afterwards did in exposing the tendency of Lord Bolingbroke's opinions) of Dr. Charles Lucas, a celebrated character of the Irish metropolis: who, from apothecary, and then physician, became a patriot; thence by the imprudent persecution of the people in power, elevated into a popular idol; who afterwards became member for the city; whose statue now stands on the stair-case of the Royal Exchange, Dublin; whose remains received the unusual honour of being attended to the grave by the whole corporation, which body bestowed a pension on his widow. What were the effects of Mr. Burke's pen it is now vain to inquire; its vigour, judging from his private letters written about this time, was little inferior to that of any future period of his life.

His destination, from an early period, was for the bar; then the usual resort, either as a profession or as forming a more easy introduction to the House of Commons, of the young men of Ireland distinguished for talents and ambition. Some of his relations say that he was intended from the first for the English bar, and there is some ground for the belief in the early period at which his name was enrolled at the Middle Temple. The following is the entry.

> 23 *Aprilis*, 1747.
>
> Mr. Edmundus Burke, filius secundus Richardi Burke de civitate Dublin. Unius Attornatorum curiæ Scaccariæ Domini Regis in Regno Hiberniæ, admissus est in societatem Medii Templi, London.
>
> *Et dat pro fine* £4. 0*s*. 0*d*.

Early in 1750, not in 1753 as commonly stated, he arrived in London to keep the customary terms previous to being called to the bar. His name appears again in the books of the society as entering into bond, May 2, 1750; his sureties being John Burke, Serjeant's-inn, Fleet-street, Gent. and Thomas Kelly, of the Middle Temple, Gent.

His arrival, however, preceded this period by several months. The first letter to his friend Shackleton bears date the 20th of February, and mentions the introduction of the bill by the Earl of Chesterfield for that alteration in the calendar, which soon afterwards took place.

It may be remarked here, that a long copy of verses on Mrs. Cibber, the celebrated actress, contained in the Annual Register for 1768, are supposed to have been written by Mr. Burke previous to his quitting Dublin; it is possible they may be by his brother Richard; and the least doubt upon the point is sufficient for not giving them insertion here.

CHAPTER II.

First Impressions of London and England generally.—Contemplates an Attempt for the Logic Professorship of Glasgow.—First avowed Publications.

His first impressions on viewing the English metropolis are vividly expressed in a letter to his schoolfellow already mentioned, Mr. Matthew Smith; and the allusions to Westminster Abbey and the House of Commons, " the chosen temples of fame," as he said on another occasion, will be esteemed by those who look to auguries sufficiently remarkable; the whole is in a peculiar degree expressive of *character*, the reflections ingenious, and just, and even profound, like most of his letters written afterwards, which, though really despatched ôff-hand, were by many believed to be studied compositions.

" You'll expect some short account of my journey to this great city. To tell you the truth, I made very few remarks as I rolled along, for my mind was occupied with many thoughts, and my eyes often filled with tears, when I reflected on all the dear friends I left behind ; yet the prospects could not fail to attract the attention of the most indifferent : country seats sprinkled round on every side, some in the modern taste, some in the style of old De Coverley Hall, all smiling on the neat but humble cottage ; every village as neat and compact as a bee-hive, resounding with the busy hum of industry ; and inns like palaces.

" What a contrast to our poor country, where you'll scarce find a cottage ornamented with a chimney ! But what pleased me most of all was the progress of agriculture, my favourite study, and my favourite pursuit, if Providence had blessed me with a few paternal acres.*

" A description of London and its natives would fill a volume. The buildings are very fine ; it may be called the sink of vice ; but its hospitals and charitable institutions, whose turrets pierce the skies like so many electrical conductors avert the wrath of Heaven. The inhabitants may be divided into two classes, the *undoers* and the *undone*, generally so, I say, for I am persuaded there are many men of honesty, and women of virtue, in every street. An Englishman is cold and distant at first; he is very cautious even in forming an acquaintance ; he must know you well before he enters into friendship with you; but if he does, he is not the first to dissolve that sacred bond; in short, a real Englishman is one that performs more than he promises; in company he is rather silent, extremely prudent in his expressions, even in politics, his favourite topic. The women are not quite so reserved; they consult their glasses to the best advantage; and as nature is very liberal in her gifts to their persons, and even mind, it is not easy for a young man to escape their glances, or to shut his ears to their softly-flowing accents.

---

* At this period his elder brother being alive was of course in succession to the paternal property.

"As to the state of learning in this city, you know I have not been long enough in it to form a proper judgment of that subject. I don't think however, there is as much respect paid to a man of letters on this side the water as you imagine. I don't find that genius, the 'rath primrose, which forsaken dies,' is patronised by any of the nobility; so that writers of the first talents are left to the capricious patronage of the public. Notwithstanding this discouragement, literature is cultivated in a high degree. Poetry raises her enchanting voice to heaven. History arrests the wings of Time in his flight to the gulf of oblivion. Philosophy, the queen of arts, and the daughter of heaven, is daily extending her intellectual empire. Fancy sports on airy wing like a meteor on the bosom of a summer cloud; and even Metaphysics spins her cobwebs and catches some flies.

"The House of Commons not unfrequently exhibits explosions of eloquence that rise superior to those of Greece and Rome, even in their proudest days. Yet, after all, a man will make more by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, unless he can get into the trade wind; and then he may sail secure over Pactolean sands. As to the stage, it is sunk, in my opinion, into the lowest degree; I mean with regard to the trash that is exhibited on it; but I don't attribute this to the taste of the audience, for when Shakspeare warbles his 'native wood-notes,' the boxes, pit, and gallery, are crowded—and the gods are true to every word, if properly winged to the heart.

"Soon after my arrival in town I visited Westminster Abbey: the moment I entered I felt a kind of awe pervade my mind which I cannot describe; the very silence seemed sacred. Henry the Seventh's Chapel is a very fine piece of Gothic architecture, particularly the roof; but I am told that it is exceeded by a chapel in the University of Cambridge. Mrs. Nightingale's monument has not been praised beyond its merit. The attitude and expression of the husband in endeavouring to shield his wife from the dart of death, is natural and affecting. But I always thought that the image of death would be much better represented with an extinguished torch inverted, than with a dart. Some would imagine, that all these monuments were so many monuments of folly;—I don't think so; what useful lessons of morality and sound philosophy do they not exhibit! When the high-born beauty surveys her face in the polished parian, though dumb the marble, yet it tells her that it was placed to guard the remains of as fine a form, and as fair a face, as her own. They show besides how anxious we are to extend our loves and friendships beyond the grave, and to snatch as much as we can from oblivion—such is our natural love of immortality: but it is here that letters obtain the noblest triumphs; it is here that the swarthy daughters of Cadmus may hang their trophies on high: for when all the pride of the chisel and the pomp of heraldry yield to the silent touches of time, a single line, a half-worn-out inscription, remain faithful to their trust. Blest be the man that first introduced these strangers into our islands, and may they never want protection or merit! I have not the least doubt that the finest poem in the English language, I mean Milton's Il Penseroso, was composed in the long resounding aisle of a mouldering cloister or ivy'd abbey. Yet after all, do you know that I would rather sleep in the southern corner of a little country church-yard, than in the tomb of the Capulets. I should like, however, that my dust should mingle with kindred dust. The good old expression, 'family burying-ground,' has something pleasing in it, at least to me."

During the first few years of his stay in London, the vacations were devoted to an examination of the interior of the country, and sometimes crossing to Ireland, where, in 1751, as already mentioned, he took his master's degree, and is believed to have made some stay in Cork. Health, as much as curiosity, formed the inducement to these excursions; the former continued delicate and ill adapted to severe study, though this does not seem to have relaxed his diligence in any degree towards general literature; and that the remedial means he adopted did not wholly fail of effect, we have his own testimony.

Writing to Mr. Shackleton, April 5, 1751, he says, "my health is tolerable, my studies too in the same degree." In another letter of the same year, dated 31st August, from Monmouth, which had then some reputation as a resort for invalids, and whither he had proceeded from Bristol, he alludes playfully to his more juvenile writings, and hopes his present exercises (alluding to the law) may be attended with better success than his literary studies, on the ground that "though a middling poet cannot be endured, there is some quarter for a middling lawyer."

To the same correspondent, September 28, 1752, dated from the house of a Mr. Druce, at Torlin, near Bradford in Wiltshire, a few miles from Bath, where, in company with a friend, he made some stay, enjoying the amusements of the country, he describes how the preceding part of the year had been employed. "Since I had your letter I have often shifted the scene. I spent part of the winter, that is, term-time, in London, and part in Croydon in Surry; about the beginning of summer finding myself attacked with my old complaint (an affection of the chest), I went once more to Bristol, and found the same benefit; I thank God for it."

Whether he found the law, as a profession, alien to his habits, his health incompetent to its persevering pursuit, or became weaned from it by that attachment to general literature, which has in so many other instances of men of genius proved irresistible, it is certain that his views soon changed; for at the expiration of the usual time he was not called to the bar. Among his brother templars were a few old college acquaintance, who seemed to have come to the same determination; for they were afterwards more known in politics and letters than in law.

In London also he met with many other old friends and college acquaintance, some of whose letters, alluding to him as a very "promising young man," "a remarkably clever young man," "one who possessed very superior genius and information," were extant very recently in more than one family in Ireland. With Dr. Brocklesby, then pushing his way as physician, and who soon afterwards received an appointment in the medical department of the army, he renewed his acquaintance; and with Dr. Joseph Fenn Sleigh, already mentioned, who was finishing his studies, commenced it: both were Quakers, and both afterwards quitted that persuasion. It was about this period that the late Arthur Murphy, then carrying on the Gray's Inn Journal, hearing the acquirements of his young countryman, Mr. Burke, loudly praised by some mutual friends, gained an introduction to him at the chambers of Mr. Kelly, whose name appears as one of his sureties in the Temple books, and on the first interview assented to the general opinion of his being a superior young man; an impression which every succeeding meeting served to increase. The diversity of his knowledge, and the force and originality of his observations, were striking; in history, politics, polite letters and philosophy, there seemed little with which he was not familiar; and his attachment to the latter, "queen of arts, and daughter of heaven," as he had called her in the letter to Mr. Smith, was so strong, that it is not surprising he should wish to unite his interest with his taste, in the idea entertained about this time of getting elected to the professorship of logic, then vacant in the university of Glasgow.

A principal inducement to this step was probably the recollection that Ireland had more than once supplied the Scottish seats of learning with eminent men. Her last and greatest present to the university in question was, in the lauguage of the first philosopher of Scotland,* "the profound and eloquent" Dr. Francis Hutcheson.

Born in the north of Ireland, educated at Glasgow, and settling afterwards in Dublin, he soon became distinguished by his writings as one of the first philosophers of the age; and though a dissenter, at a time when dissenters were looked upon with an evil eye, enjoyed the friendship and protection of Primate Boulter, Archbishop King, Bishop Synge, Lords Molesworth, Granville, and others, the most eminent in that country for virtue and talents.

---

* Mr. Dugald Stewart.

His fame at length drew an invitation to the university of Glasgow in 1729, first to the Logic and then to the Moral Philosophy Chair; an event of great moment both in the intellectual and literary history of Scotland. His celebrity attracted a very large class from all parts of the country. He was the immediate precursor of Adam Smith, Reid, Beattie, Ferguson, and others; the instructor of some of them, and, from his celebrity, a source of interest and emulation to all; while the ingenuity and eloquence of his lectures, says the distinguished philosopher already quoted, "contributed very powerfully to diffuse in Scotland that taste for analytical discussion and that spirit of liberal inquiry, to which the world is indebted for some of the most valuable productions of the eighteenth century;" and again, "Dr. Hutcheson, of Glasgow, by his excellent writings, and stlll more by his eloquent lectures, had diffused among a numerous race of pupils a liberality of sentiment and a refinement of taste, unknown before in this part of the island."

Upon this eminent man, whose "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of Beauty and Virtue," is believed to have suggested the title, at least, of the "Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," our young adventurer had his eye, in aiming at running, perhaps, a similar career of philosophical fame.

Scotsmen, he understood, were no less fond of abstractions in the schools, than of the more substantial and valuable realities of active life; and to suit their taste in the former respect, he laid in, in addition to an unusually ample stock of general knowledge, a large adventure in metaphysics,—no less than a refutation of the systems of his own countryman the celebrated Berkeley, and of Hume. There is also some reason to believe that he had even at this time sketched the outline of the essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as an additional claim to the vacant chair. This honour, however, he failed to obtain; under what particular circumstances is not now known. It is certain that he never proceeded to an active canvass; but being in that quarter of the island, and probably hearing that the office was to be awarded to the successful competitor in a public trial of skill, he took the resolution of contesting the palm with the Scottish literati, until informed that private arrangements in the university and city, rendered any such attempt totally hopeless. The inquiry made of Principal Taylor, by a friend of the writer, is satisfactory as to Mr. Burke having been a candidate, but not as to the exact date. His successful competitor was Mr. James Clow.*

He returned with undiminished spirit to his studies, and to what continued a favourite enjoyment with him through life, occasional excursions through the country. Having extended his journey to France, it was believed

---

* Since the above was written, the writer has been favoured with the following communication from Mr. Dugald Stewart:—

"I am very doubtful of the fact that ever Burke was a candidate for a professorship in Glasgow. I remember perfectly a conversation with Mr. (Adam) Smith on the subject, in the course of which he said that the story was extremely current, but he knew of no evidence upon which it rested; and he suspected it took its rise entirely from an opinion which he had expressed at Glasgow upon the publication of Burke's book on the Sublime and Beautiful, that the author of that book would be a great acquisition to the college, if he would accept of a chair."

This opinion, though entitled to every respect, is not decisive. The evidence is rather the other way; for the story is not only old, but was repeated three or four times in print during Mr. Burke's life-time, and on one occasion came immediately under his eye without receiving any formal contradiction from him, by many who knew the falsehood of the report of his having been educated at St. Omer, that he had simply visited that town, and describing its institutions in company, the report originated of his having been brought up there. But even this is not the fact. He observed at his own table more than once, "He could not but consider it a remarkable circumstance (in allusion to this report) that in three or four journeys he had made in France, St. Omer's happened to be the chief place in the northern provinces which he had *never* visited, and this not from design, but accident; for being continually spoken of in Ireland as a place of education, it was no more than natural that a traveller from that country should wish to see it in the indulgence of rational curiosity." By all accounts, however, his curiosity was very active; the ideal and the beautiful, it is still remembered, being mingled with the useful; and pictures and statues, a farm-yard, a mine, or a manufactory, were equally objects of investigation.

His more sedentary pursuits were followed with a degree of assiduity, which vivacious men commonly term *plodding;* but which more sober judgments know to be a good substitute for all other talents, and in fact the only surety for their excellence. His application was unwea-

---

which, as it did not come under the head of *slander*, he might have deigned to give it. The name of his opponent also is expressly mentioned. The letter from Glasgow alluded to above, bearing upon the point of his being a candidate, is as follows:

"Glasgow, January 29th 1823.

"My dear Sir,

"I have made inquiry at Principal Taylor in order to learn whether Mr. Edmund Burke was actually a Professor of Logic in the college of Glasgow between the years 1749 and 1752, or was an unsuccessful candidate for the chair.—The Principal states that Mr. Burke was a candidate for that chair in 1752 or 1753, but that he was *unsuccessful*."

ried. Unlike most persons of vivid fancy, he had good sense enough to recollect, that the most brilliant imaginations ought not only to have wings to fly, but also legs to stand upon ; in other words, that genius, unpropped by knowledge, may serve to amuse, but will rarely be useful in the more important concerns of mankind.

The desire to acquire and the drudgery of acquiring, were promoted by habits of life, which concurring testimony, collected about twenty years afterwards from several of his acquaintance, went to prove were more than commonly equable and temperate. Moderation in the pleasurable enjoyments of youth seemed so much a gift from nature, that, at a period of life when the passions too often run riot, he either had few vicious and irregular propensities, or possessed the next best gift of providence, —the power to control them. His excesses were not in dissipation, but in study. He gave way to no licentious inclinations. It is asserted that he did not then know a single game at cards; and that wine was no further a favourite than as it contributed to social intercourse, of which he was at every period of life, particularly with literary and scientific men, extremely fond, so far as the pleasures of conviviality could be enjoyed without its excesses. One of his chief resorts was the Grecian coffee-house, where his habits for a long time were well remembered, and his conversation quoted many years subsequently by members of the Middle Temple Society.

He who devotes his days to the treasuring up of knowledge, may be permitted to set apart the evenings to recreation. While in Dublin he had become attached to the drama from its intimate relation to literature, to poetry, and perhaps more than either, to the displays it exemplifies of human nature: in a vast metropolis like London, indeed, the theatre is almost the natural resort of a literary man; for there, even when most in search of relaxation, he may find some, and not unprofitable, employment for the mind.

The acquaintance of Mr. Murphy, who had by this time attempted the stage as a profession, of many of the leading theatrical critics who frequented the Grecian, and of several brother templers equally fond of dramatic amusements, introduced him to some of the principal performers: to Garrick, from whom he confessed to have profited in oratorical action, and in the management of his voice, at whose table he saw many of the most distinguished characters of the age, and where his talents and powers of conversation became more generally known: To Macklin, at whose debating society, which flourished for a few months in 1754, he is believed to have made his first attempt at public speaking, and whom it is said he recommended soon after to Mr. Wedderburn, then coming forward at the bar, in order to get rid of his Scottish accent: and to the celebrated Mrs. (or Miss) Woffington, with whom it has been insinuated, though without any probable foundation, that a still more intimate connexion existed.

This lady, so well known in the annals of the theatre, was famed for possessing beauty, wit, vivacity, fascination of manners, and very considerable powers of mind, which, when performing in Dublin, caused her to be admitted (the only one of her sex who was so) a member of a famous association of noblemen and gentlemen there, called the Beef-steak Club; she possessed almost every thing but that which alone can make a woman respectable,—virtue. Men of the highest rank, of learning, of wealth, of wit, and even of morals, sought her society; at her house he extended his acquaintance, and, among others, is said to have been introduced and recommended by her to the Duke of Newcastle, then prime minister; an assertion probably not correct, as his grace, ten years afterwards, had nearly proved a very serious enemy, either from forgetting the recommendation, or suspecting that because it was not attended to, the pen of Mr. Burke had been employed against his vacillating and divided administration between 1754 and 1757.

The ambition of being distinguished in literature, seems to have been one of his earliest, as it was one of his latest passions; prompted as much perhaps by that early maturity of mind of which his letters and contemporary testimony furnish evidence, as the natural desire of advancing his fortune and reputation. Frequent intercourse with the literary society of the metropolis would necessarily inspire the wish to test the vigour of his pen by comparison with that of others, through the medium of the press; though the state of letters in London, which he alludes to in the communication to Mr. Smith, by observing that much more was to be made by the figures of arithmetic than the figures of rhetoric, does not appear to have inspired any very sanguine expectations of authorship being a source of pecuniary advantage.

The first productions even of great writers are seldom preserved, and are perhaps seldom worth preserving. Those of Mr. Burke do not seem to have escaped the general fate, as there is no doubt that some pieces of his were published previous to those which appear first in his works; little more, however, can be ascertained respecting them now, than what contemporary remembrance, and possibly conjecture, supplied, after his name had become familiar to the public ear.

One of the first was believed by Mr. Murphy to be a poem, or poetical translation from the Latin, which, from the preceding specimen, is not improbable; but as nothing further is known, its success could not be considerable, and might have induced a distaste in the writer to any future attempt of length in that species of composition. It is certain that soon after his arrival in London he wrote to Ireland for anecdotes to engraft into concise biographies of Mr. Brooke, the celebrated author of the Fool of Quality, and of the tragedy of Gustavus Vasa, and of his new acquaintance Mrs. Woffington; these, with the poetry in question, may possibly be traced by the more diligent collectors of the pamphlets and periodical publications of the time. The Essay on the Drama, preserved in his works, is believed to be of the same date. So also may be many of the materials collected for a work on the oppressed condition of the catholics of Ireland, which are likewise among his posthumous remains. Politics were probably not neglected; and in criticism, for which his range of information and keenness of remark offered peculiar facilities, he is supposed to have written much.

His first avowed work, the "Vindication of Natural Society," which came out in the spring of 1756, may in fact be termed a piece of philosophical criticism, couched under the guise of serious irony. It was an octavo pamphlet of 106 pages, published by Cooper at the price of 1*s*. 6*d*.; and originated in an opinion generally expressed in literary society, of the style of Lord Bolingbroke being not only the best of that time, but in itself wholly inimitable; and in the approbation expressed by some persons of what were called his philosophical opinions, which had then been recently published.

The design of Mr. Burke was to produce a covert mimicry both of his style and principles; and particularly, by pushing the latter to their inevitable conclusion, to force conviction of their unsoundness, by shewing that the arguments employed by the peer against religion, applied as strongly against every other institution of civilised men. His lordship's philosophy, such as it was, was the newest pattern of the day, and of course excited considerable notice, as coming from a man who had made a conspicuous figure in politics; and whose career, after a youth spent in the stews, and a manhood in turbulence and disaffection to the government of his country, seemed appropriately terminated by an old age of infidelity. Accustomed to disregard honest and wise opinions on other matters, he wanted courage to show his contempt of them on this; but at his death left to Mallet, a brother infidel, the office of ushering his benevolent legacy into light; which drew from Dr. Johnson, when asked his opinion of it, the exclamation, " A scoundrel! who spent his life in charging a pop-gun against christianity; and a coward! who, afraid of the report of his own gun, left half a crown to a hungry Scotchman to draw the trigger after his death."

The novelty of the plan of attack upon the dialectics of the noble philosopher, caused some stir in the literary circles, though it has been untruly stated by a virulent enemy, in the guise of a biographer, to have fallen stillborn from the press. Lord Chesterfield and Bishop Warburton for a short time believed it genuine; Mallet, it has been said, went to Dodsley's shop when filled with the literati, purposely to disavow it; and the periodical critics, though not deceived when their strictures appeared in print, gave it a full examination, and much praise for the ingenuity shown in the execution.

The imitation indeed was so perfect as to constitute identity rather than resemblance. It was not merely the language, style, and general eloquence of the original which had been caught; but the whole mind of the peer, his train of thought, the power to enter into his conceptions, seemed to be transfused into the pen of his imitator with a fidelity and 'grace beyond the reach of art.' Several able critics of the present day have expressed their admiration of it in strong terms; one of them, in a celebrated periodical work, alluding to this power of copying an author in *all* his peculiarities, says—

"In Burke's imitation of Bolingbroke (the most perfect specimen perhaps that ever will exist of the art in question) we have all the qualities which distinguish the style, or we may indeed say the genius of that noble writer, concentrated and brought before us; so that an ordinary reader, who, in perusing his genuine works merely felt himself dazzled and disappointed—delighted and wearied he could not tell why, is now enabled to form a definite and precise conception of the causes of those opposite sensations—and to trace to the nobleness of the diction and the inaccuracy of the reasoning—the boldness of the propositions and the rashness of the inductions—the magnificence of the pretensions and the feebleness of the performance, those contradictory judgments with the confused result of which he had been perplexed in his study of the original."

This tract, which was reprinted in 1765, is perhaps equally remarkable for having anticipated many of the wild notions, under the name of philosophy, broached a few years ago in the general rage to overturn old opinions as well as old institutions. It was amusing to see what were first introduced to the world as specimens of ingenious absurdity, retailed to the ignorant of our own day as the legitimate inductions of philosophy. For in this piece may be found (advanced of course ironically) something of the same cant about the evils of governments, the misdeeds of statesmen, the injustice of aristocratic distinctions, the troubles engendered by religion, the tyranny and uncertainty of laws, the virtues of the poor over the rich, with much more of what the author, when speaking seriously, justly termed abuse of reason. Though gifted with no common degree of foresight, he could have no idea that these phantoms of philosophy, conjured up for his amusement in 1756, should be opposed to him 40 years afterwards as substantial realities; that his whole strength should be required to put down his own shadows.

A few months afterwards, in the same year, appeared "A Philosophical Inquiry into the Origin of our Ideas of the Sublime and Beautiful," published for Dodsley, at the price of 3*s*. Of this celebrated work, so long before the public, which now forms a text-book in liberal education, and one of reference in our universities, little more need be said than that it is perfectly original in the execution and design. Longinus indeed had written on the sublime, and Addison partially on grandeur and beauty, but neither of them profoundly nor distinctly; they exemplify and illustrate rather than analyse or dive to the sources of those impressions on the mind; and they even confound the sublime with the beautiful on many occasions. But Mr. Burke's book marks the line between them so distinctly, as that they cannot be mistaken; he investigates the constituents and appearances of each scientifically, and illustrates his views with great happiness. Johnson considered it a model of true philosophical criticism. Blair, who praises its originality and ingenuity, has profited much by it in his remarks on sublimity and beauty, and in the theory of that often-discussed quality, taste, which in this work is justly observed to prevail in our minds "either from a greater degree of natural sensibility, or from a closer and longer attention to the object."

As indicative of character, of extensive and various observation, and accurate deduction, both these productions are remarkable, particularly the latter, considering the time of life at which it was written. From the nature of the subject it could not be a work of haste, but of much inquiry, of keen penetration, and of diligent remark, continued for some period of time; and, in fact, is said to have been planned when he was 22 years old, and finished before he was 25; an age at which indifferent rhymes or loose love-stories form the common exercises of young templers, and when scarcely any man, whatever be his attainments, thinks of starting for the highest degree in philosophy, much less is enabled to make good his claim to the distinction. Both works are evidences of a mind early and deeply reflective, investigating for itself, and coming out of the inquiry, not with a desire to shine in paradox, or to astonish the world by propounding something very new or adverse to all received opinions, but with the conviction that the general belief of mankind in the main questions that interest them, religion, politics, and philosophy, are right. The simple, unornamented style of the Inquiry, is in good taste as applied to a philosophical subject; but forms a contrast to some of his subsequent oratorical efforts.

Continued application to these pursuits produced a fit of illness—too often the lot of the labourer in literature,—whose existence, though gratifying to the pride of the human mind, from a real or fancied superiority over others, is in practice one of the most irksome. For it admits of little relaxation. It must be pursued chiefly in solitude. Society, which cheers and animates most other men in their calling, becomes an impediment to the more brilliant conceptions of the author. His business is with books; his chosen companions the mute, yet vivacious offspring of the brain. Bound to his desk, either by over-ruling necessity, or scarcely less forcible inclination, the lighter enjoyments of life cannot be often tasted without interfering with the continuity of his pursuits. Before him lies the stated task—the page not of nature but of the printer—to which he must sometimes unwillingly turn when more attractive objects invite him elsewhere; for the sun may shine, the fields look green, the flowers bloom in vain for him, who in sallying forth to refresh his faded intellect or exhausted frame, must neglect the occupation which possibly gives him subsistence. Such also is the case now and then with the too diligent student. Cumberland has given a recital of bodily suffering endured in the acquisition of learning; and Burke, had he written his own life, might have told a story still more distressing.

For the re-establishment of his health, Bath and Bristol were again resorted to with success. In the former city resided his countryman Dr. Christopher Nugent, a very amiable man, and an esteemed and able physician, who having some previous acquaintance with Mr. Burke, kindly invited him to his house as better adapted to the wants and situation of an invalid. An attachment to his daughter Miss Jane Mary Nugent was the result; the guest offered her nearly all he had at this time to offer except what his father supplied, his heart and hand, which were accepted; she was born in the south of Ireland, though educated chiefly in England: her father was a Roman catholic, her mother a rigid presbyterian, who not only stipulated for the enjoyment of her own religion but the privilege of educating her daughters in the same tenets, which were therefore adopted by Mrs. Burke. It has been asserted, however, that she was a catholic, and among a hundred other shameful slanders vented against her husband, by political enemies, assuming even to write his life, was one that he kept a popish priest in the house for her, upon whom he continually exercised his love for deistical raillery. It is difficult to conceive more malicious or more abominable falsehoods, which had not even a shadow of foundation; they are an epitome, however, of that "hunt of obloquy," in his own words, "which has ever pursued me with a full cry through life."

This union was to him a source of comfort ever after. Added to affectionate admiration of his talents, she possessed accomplishments, good sense, goodness of heart, and a sweetness of manners and disposition which served to allay many of the anxieties of his future career,—the labours to attain fame and independence, the fretful moments attendant on severe study, the irritations produced by party and political zeal, and the tempestuous passions engendered by constant contention in active parliamentary life. He repeatedly declared that "every care vanished the moment he entered under his own roof." He wrote a beautiful piece, filling closely a sheet of letter paper, *the idea of a perfect wife*, which he presented to her one morning on the anniversary of their marriage, delicately heading the paper thus, "The Character of ———" leaving her to fill up the blank. To his friends also, the earliest as well as the latest, she was equally a theme of praise. William Burke thus writes of her in March, 1766:—"Poor Mrs. Burke has been visited by a most severe cold; the delicacy of her frame, and that infinity of intrinsic worth that makes her dear to us, raised some anxious apprehensions; but, thank God! she is so much better that our fears are no more.' Men of genius are seldom so fortunate in their partners; by nature an ideal race, they look perhaps for more perfections than commonly fall to the lot of humanity, and expecting to meet with angels, are sadly disappointed in finding mere women.—

The war then lately commenced with France exciting attention to the American colonies as one of the chief points in dispute, there came out in April, 1757, in two volumes octavo, "An Account of the European settlements in America."

Doubts have been often started whether Mr. Burke was the sole or joint author of this work; there is, however, no question but that he wrote, if not the whole of it, at least by far the greater part. Mr. Shackleton, who had no other means of knowing the fact than from himself or his family, always stated it to be wholly his. The Editor of the edition published by Stockdale in 1808, asserts positively that he saw the receipt for the copy money, amounting to fifty guineas, in Mr. Burke's hand-writing. Internal evidence tends to the same conclusion, both in language and manner, and particularly in some phrases, such as (when speaking of exchanges of territory) the "cutting and shuffling of a treaty of peace," and others equally peculiar, which may be found in his future works. Toward the end of the second volume occurs a passage on population nearly the same in idea and expression as used by him in an argument with Johnson on the same subject some years afterwards, and repeated by Boswell. Similar coincidences may be traced on other points connected with political economy; and the account of the North American colonies, which beyond all question is his, contains the germ of some of his arguments, and much of that intimate acquaintance with the people and country, afterwards displayed by him in parliament. It may be remarked also, that he contends for the probability of a north-west passage, which at present occupies so much of the public attention.

On the other hand, the late Lord Macartney said it was the joint production of Edmund, Richard his brother who had joined him from Ireland, and their name-sake and most intimate friend through life, William Bourke; his lordship was on the most friendly terms with them all, and might have understood the fact to be so, but he himself did not arrive in London till above a year after the publication. It is also true that Edmund did not subsequently avow it, though for this there might be sufficient reasons; his reputation did not require such an addition, especially if it could be useful to his brother, or to William Bourke; he might not wish to claim as his own what was in part the work of others, however small that part might be; and being brought out on an emergency, he might deem it an unsatisfactory as well as a hasty production, unworthy of his fame.

Whether wholly his own or not, the sketch, for it professes to be little more,—and an apology is made in the preface for inequality in the style which the reader may not readily discover,—is in many parts masterly, the reflections just and often original, but paraded perhaps too formally and frequently before the reader, so as sometimes to interfere with the facts, or almost to supersede them. The style is what may be termed ambitious, aiming at depth, terseness, and brevity, yet too frequently betraying the effort; no writer, however, need be ashamed of such a work. Mr. Dugald Stewart terms it a masterly sketch. Abbé Raynal is believed to have profited much by it in his history; and at home its popularity was such as to reach a seventh edition; the published price of the two volumes, containing above seven hundred octavo pages, was only eight shillings; this, while it accounts for the small sum received for the copy-right, impresses the fact of the little encouragement then given to literature.

Soon after this time, Mr. Burke, under the pressure of temporary difficulty, is said to have disposed of his books, his coat of arms pasted in some of them, according to the story, having inadvertently disclosed the secret. Hence it has been asserted that he was frequently so; and those who would throw a slight of some sort upon his memory, in order, by the absence of any more substantial failings, to bring greatness down to their own level by some means or other, have said that for many years his pen, exerted in the periodical publications, afforded him the only means he enjoyed of support.

For these assertions there is little or no foundation. The simple fact of declining to be called to the bar, is of itself evidence that had he not had other resources, he would not have declined the profession of a barrister, calculated as he was beyond all question, to be the greatest that ever addressed a jury. His father, who possessed a handsome income from his profession, allowed him about 200*l.* per annum, at that time a liberal sum, during much of the time he spent in London: and though any additional supplies derived from the exercise of his literary talents were doubtless sufficiently acceptable, as they are to much richer men, it is certain they were not considerable. Literature, as may be believed from the sum given for the work just noticed, was then a wretched trade. Johnson, the first author of the age, could barely elevate himself above abject poverty; and parliamentary, legal, and theatrical reporting, now a source of emolument to many, and by which several of the law students are enabled to keep their terms with little expense to their friends, were then in a great degree unknown.

There is indeed an amusing, but rather absurd coyness among the scribbling race themselves, about being known to write for periodical works, and to receive payment for their labours. After all, as no man writes well by intuition, so magazines, pamphlets, and newspapers, form the natural nurseries for unfledged authors ; in these they try the strength of their wing before engaging in more arduous flights. Some make the experiment for amusement, some for improvement, some to circulate a favourite opinion, and some who are nevertheless not at all dependant on such small and casual supplies, to be enabled by the produce to add to their libraries.*

Why there should be any slight attached to the idea of profiting in a pecuniary way by literary labour, it is difficult to conceive. To accept the reward, is not necessarily to be in want of it, or to be under obligation by receiving it. " He who writes otherwise than for money," said Dr. Johnson, " is a fool." So thought Mr. Burke ; so said Darwin ; so say, and so think, most others whose writings are in request by the world, or who know the solitary toil by which alone a good work can be produced, and who in other respects care nothing for money. No man in any station of life ; no statesman, no lawyer, no physician, no clergyman, no soldier, gives his labours, mental or bodily, to society, without hire. Why then should not the author also have his hire without slight or reproach? He who writes gratuitously for a bookseller, works for a man probably richer than himself. This species of charity is therefore misapplied. If a writer can afford to be generous, let it be to those who are really in want; for the fruits of his ingenuity, whether diurnal, monthly, or quarterly, if not necessary to himself may be advantageously applied to purposes of private benevolence.

---

* A young author, perfectly independent of literature as a trade, lately received from the conductor of a periodical work a few pounds for some of his essays, which he directly laid out in books. "This money," said he, "gives me more pleasure than ten times the sum arising from any other source. I take pride in it, because by the labour of my own mind I am enabled to make myself more extensively acquainted with the minds of others."

Some few years ago, when a member of the House of Commons, of the party of Mr. Fox, under the influence of erroneous information, had been throwing some slight upon the memory of Mr. Burke, as having been obliged to write in the periodical publications for subsistence previously to coming into parliament, Mrs Burke, who saw the statement in the newspapers, ran her pen through it in the presence of some friends, observing, "Mr. Burke himself would not take the trouble to contradict this, nor indeed any thing else they say of him, but really I have no patience with such reports; I declare them from my own knowledge gross and unfounded falsehoods; that he received money for his publications is true, but the amount was very small—not worth mentioning as a means of support."

CHAPTER III.

Abridgment of English history.—Annual Register.—Acquaintance with Dr. Johnson, Mrs. Ann Pitt, Hume, Lord Charlemont, Gerrard Hamilton, Barry, Goldsmith.

THE reputation of the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful being quickly diffused through the literary world by the trading critics, as well as the most eminent private judges of the day, immediately stamped the author's fame as a man of uncommon ingenuity and very profound philosophical powers; though some of his theories did not, as might be expected in investigating matters of taste, receive universal assent.

In 1757 a new edition was called for, to which was prefixed, for the first time, the introductory chapter on taste. To his father, who had not been well pleased with his desertion of the law, a copy was sent, which produced in return a present of 100*l.* as a testimony of paternal admiration. Another copy he despatched to his friend Shackleton, and on one of the blank leaves wrote, as expressive of his affectionate and unceasing regard—

Accipe et hæc manuum tibi quæ monumenta meorum
Sint—et longum testentur amorem:

and all his future political works, especially the Thoughts on the Discontents, the Reflections on the French Revolution, the Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs, were transmitted to the same friend.

In the letter accompanying the Essay, dated from Battersea, August 10, 1757, he says, in jocular allusion to his matrimonial adventure, "I am now a married man myself, and therefore claim some respect from the married fraternity; at least for your own sakes you will not pretend to consider me the worse man." And in another part of this letter he apologizes for a long silence by his "manner of life, chequered with various designs, sometimes in London, sometimes in remote parts of the country, sometimes in France, and shortly, please God to be, in America."

The design expressed in the latter part of this sentence never took effect; neither is the object of it clearly known;

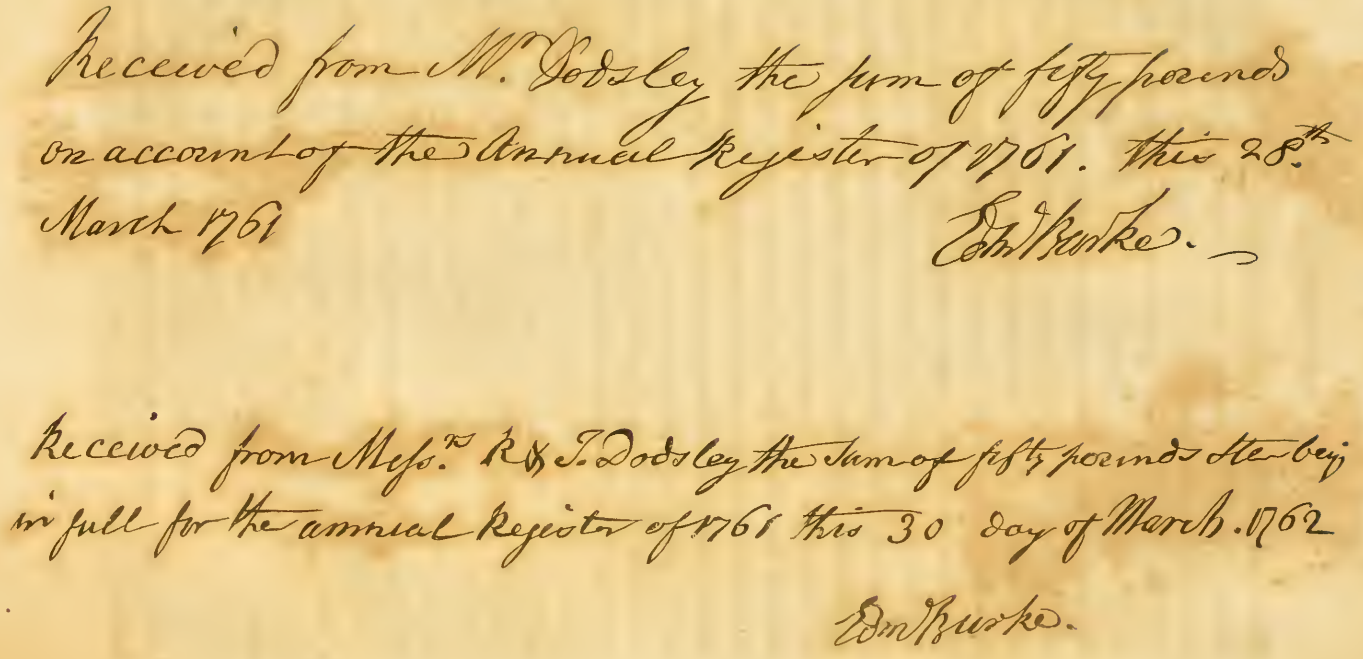
some believing it to have been the offer of a small situation under government; others the invitation of an old fellow-collegian settled in Philadelphia, who thought the sphere of the new world offered a less crowded area for the display of his talents. Whatever may have been the inducement, fortunately he did not persevere in his purpose; genius might have lost one of her most favoured offspring, and England one of her greatest ornaments. But the fact is curious in itself, as expressive of the same vague idea of expatriation which prevailed among many of the extraordinary political characters of the preceding century, and with some of the men of genius, as Goldsmith, Burns and others, of our own.

In January 1758, his domestic circle received an addition by the birth of that favourite son, who through life was beloved with even more than parental fondness, and whose death, at the early age of 35, tended to hasten his own. Another son, named Edmund, born about two years afterwards, died in infancy. The wants of an increasing family proved an irresistible stimulus to industry by all the means within his power, and his pen at this time was actively employed on a variety of subjects, some of which, never published, as well as others of an earlier date, though pretty well ascertained to be in existence, have not been recovered by his executors.

One of those which remained in his own possession, was an "Essay towards an Abridgment of English History," which he had intimated to his Ballitore friends some time previously, it was his intention to write at length.

Eight sheets of this work were printed for Dodsley in 1757, but it was then discontinued, probably from hearing that Hume was engaged in treating of the same period of time, and perhaps from being unable to satisfy his own taste, which, on an historical subject, was fastidious. It displays, however, a spirit of close research into the earlier history of our island, not exceeded, perhaps not equalled, by works of much greater pretension; and that portion devoted to the aboriginal people, to the Druids, to the settlement of the Saxons, and to the details relative to their laws and institutions, contains some information new to the general reader. The style differs from that of the "European Settlements," in aiming at less of effect, and is in many places elegant; the characters of William the Conqueror, Henry II. and John are happily sketched, and the distinguishing circumstances of their reigns well selected for narration, considered as a work written at the age of twenty-six.

At this moment also English literature and English history became indebted to him in no ordinary degree by the establishment, in conjunction with Dodsley, of the Annual Register. Of the excellence and utility of this work, the plan of which was ingenious, while the execution ensured great and unfading popularity, there never has been but one opinion. Several of the first volumes passed to a fifth and sixth edition. It is the best, and, without any admixture of their trash, or being tediously minute, the most comprehensive of all the periodical works; many of the sketches of contemporary history, written from his immediate dictation for about thirty years, are not merely valuable as coming from such a pen, but masterly in themselves; and in the estimation of some of the chief writers of our day, are not likely to be improved by any future historian. They form, in fact, the chief sources whence all the chief histories of the last sixty years have been, and must continue to be, compiled, besides furnishing a variety of other useful and illustrative matter. The Annual Register for 1758, the



Received from Mr. Dodsley the ſum of fifty pounds on account of the Annual Regiſter of 1761. this 28th. March 1761

Edm Burke.

Received from Meſsrs. R & J. Dodsley the Sum of fifty pounds ster. being in full for the annual Regiſter of 1761 this 30 day of March. 1762

Edm Burke.

first of the series, came out in June of the following year. Latterly a Mr. Ireland wrote much of it under Mr. Burke's immediate direction.

This work also he never thought proper to claim. The fact of his participation in it has been always matter of doubt, though, from an attentive examination of circumstances minute in themselves, added to the modesty with which he speaks of himself at all times, and even the suppression of his name on important occasions, when some extraordinary compliments were paid him, both in and out of the House of Commons, the present writer was satisfied of the affirmative, even before he received more positive information. The sum allowed for it by Dodsley was only 100*l.*; several of the receipts for the copy-money, in his own hand-writing, are still extant; the two following, for the year 1761, as being at hand, are given for the satisfaction of the reader:*—

"Received from Mr. Dodsley the sum of 50*l.* on account of the Annual Register of 1761, this 28th March, 1761. "EDM. BURKE."

"Received from Messrs. R. and T. Dodsley, the sum of 50*l.* sterling, being in full for the Annual Register of 1761, this 30th day of March, 1762.

"EDM. BURKE."

Trifling causes are tritely said to be sometimes productive of important effects; and the composition of the Annual Register may have tended to influence the future career and fame of its author. By the investigations necessary for the historical article he became acquainted with the workings of practical politics, the secret springs by which they were put in motion, and with some of the chief actors concerned. A careful writer of contemporary history for a series of years, cannot avoid, if he would, minutely scanning the political features of his own country and of Europe. He who has to speak during the session, and meditate during the recess—who acts on the great theatre of politics one half the year, and who must combine, analyse, and ponder upon the proceedings in order to write upon them during the other, may not ultimately become a wise or great statesman; but there is no doubt that he goes the most effectual way towards it. To Mr. Burke it imparted knowledge and experience almost without the trouble of the search.

---

* The originals, written on narrow slips of (of course) *unstamped* paper, are in the possession of William Upcott, Esq. of the London Institution, to whom I am indebted for a perusal of them.

An intimacy between him and the eminent Samuel Johnson had commenced some time previous to this, at the table of Garrick. On Christmas day, 1758, Mr. Murphy dined with them, and was surprised to find the lexicographer submit to contradiction, India being the subject of discussion, from his companion twenty years younger than himself, which he would tolerate in no other person, whatever their talents or experience. A mutual admiration seemed to be the first feeling between them, which nothing afterward served to diminish; surviving occasional sharp contentions for victory in conversation, the clashing of opposite political attachments and opinions, the almost irreconcileable feuds occasioned even among friends by the American contest, and the devoted adherence of the orator to that party which the other in his strong manner denominated " Whig dogs."

Nothing contributed more to this esteem than Burke's faculty to excel in what his friend so eminently practised himself and loved in others, "good talk." The conversation of the former, if less striking than that of Johnson, was more conciliating; if less pungent perhaps quite as entertaining, and in general society much more acceptable.

He communicated to his hearers scarcely less information without leaving any sting behind it of bitter sarcasm, or rude contempt, to rankle in the breast of a defeated antagonist. His manners were at the same time unassuming, distinguished more for suavity than that variety and vivacity which are often the results of studied efforts at display.

No great man ever praised another more than Johnson praised Burke. Remarking in conversation that the fame of men was generally exaggerated in the world, somebody quoted Burke as an exception, and he instantly admitted it—"Yes; Burke is an extraordinary man; his stream of mind is perpetual." "Burke's talk," said he at another time, "is the ebullition of his mind; he does not talk from a desire of distinction, but because his mind is full." An argumentative contest with him, he seemed to think required such exertion of his powers, that when unwell at one time, and Burke's name was mentioned, he observed, "If that fellow were here now he would kill me." "Burke," added he again, "is the only man whose common conversation corresponds with the general fame which he has in the world. Take up whatever topic you please, he is ready to meet you." Often did he repeat, "That no man of sense could meet Mr. Burke by accident under a gateway, to avoid a shower, without being convinced that he was the first man in England." A frequent question to Mr. Murphy was, "Are you not proud of your countryman?" adding occasionally, "Cum talis sit utinam noster esset!" Of all the triumphs of

Mr. Burke, it was perhaps the greatest to compel the admiration and personal love of a man whose mind was at once so capacious and so good, so powerful and so prejudiced, so celebrated, and so deserving of celebrity.

Among the other eminent persons to which the reputation of his philosophical essay and powers of conversation gave a ready introduction, were George Lord Littleton, Mr. Fitzherbert, member for Derby, Soame Jenyns, Mr. (afterwards Sir Joshua) Reynolds, Dr. Markham, afterwards Archbishop of York, Pulteney Earl of Bath, and perhaps a more remarkable person than either, Mrs. Anne Pitt, sister of the celebrated minister then at the head of the cabinet. This lady, Mr. Burke used to say, possessed not only great and agreeable talents, but was the most perfectly eloquent person he ever heard speak. He lamented not having committed to paper one particular conversation in which the richness and variety of her discourse quite astonished him. She was accustomed to tell her great brother in their argumentative contests, that he knew nothing but Spenser's Fairy Queen. "And no matter how that was said," added Mr. Burke, in mentioning the circumstance, "but whoever relishes and reads Spenser as he ought to be read, will have a strong hold of the English language."

Hume, whom he first met at the table of Garrick, was another acquaintance; and the historian found his opinions of so much consequence in London, that on the publication of Adam Smith's Theory of Moral Sentiments, he thought it necessary to present him with a copy, writing his reasons to the author, April 1st, 1759.

"Wedderburn and I made presents of our copies to such of our acquaintance as we thought good judges, and proper to spread the reputation of the book. I sent one to the Duke of Argyle, to Lord Littleton, Horace Walpole, Soame Jenyns, and Burke, an Irish gentleman, who wrote lately a very pretty treatise on the Sublime." No particular intimacy arose from this civility. On religion and politics their sentiments were too diametrically opposite ever to approach to agreement; and a difference of opinion respecting the Irish massacre of 1641, gave rise to some animated discussions between them; Burke maintaining, from documents existing in Dublin University, that the common accounts of that event were overcharged; Hume, that the statements in his history were correct. With Adam Smith himself a greater degree of friendship prevailed; his work was termed in the Annual Register of that year "excellent; a dry abstract of which would convey no juster idea of it than the skeleton of a departed beauty would of her form when she was alive." And on subsequently coming to London, this philosopher paid a high compliment to the sound judgment of Mr. Burke, as the only man he had met with who thought as he did on the chief topics of political economy, without previous communication.

About this time Mr. Burke occasionally resided at Plaistow in Essex. A lady, then about fourteen years old, and residing in that neighbourhood, informs the writer that she perfectly remembers him there; that his brother Richard lived chiefly with him; and that they were much noticed in the neighbourhood for talents and sociable qualities, and particularly for having a variety of visitors who were understood to be authors soliciting an opinion of their works. Some of the best books of the time, as Hume and Robertson's Histories, Leland's Philip of Macedon, Walpole's Royal and Noble Authors, and a variety of others, were sent for his perusal, and some were noticed in the Annual Register, though it may be doubted whether his connection with it was known. In noticing Johnson's Rasselas, in this year, there is an observation which has been often repeated since by other critics, as if the writers claimed it for their own. "The instruction which is found in works of this kind, when they convey any instruction at all, is not the predominant part, but arises accidentally in the course of a story planned only to please. But in this novel, the moral is the principal object, and the story is a mere vehicle to convey the instruction."

Mr. William Bourke was also frequently there, who possessing very considerable talents, literary and political, and united in the strictest friendship with Edmund and Richard from boyhood, was said to be associated with them in some of their writings. On the publication in 1760 of Lord Bath's letter to two great men, meaning Mr. Pitt, and the Duke of Newcastle, on the propriety of retaining Canada in preference to any acquisitions in the West Indies, in the proposed conditions of peace, this gentleman wrote a reply strongly recommending the retention of Guadaloupe; to which Dr. Franklin thought it necessary to write a rejoinder, supporting the opinion of Lord Bath. Another pamphlet said to have been corrected by Edmund, came from the pen of William Bourke, in 1761, on the failure of the negociation with M. Bussy, entitled, "An Examination of the Commercial Principles of the late Negociation." Some further notices of him will occur hereafter; it may be remarked however, that he and Richard Burke wrote much on political topics in the newspapers and other periodical works at this time, and for nearly twenty years afterwards, which has been improperly attributed to Edmund, who, from being in parliament, found sufficient employment in pursuing nobler game.

The latter, indeed, in addition to his literary labours, was now endeavouring to push his way in the political world, to compensate for the advantages of the profession which he had deserted. He was not, however, as has been said, either living in obscurity, or in distress, but, on the contrary, associating with some of the first political characters in the country, though himself in a private station. He occupied a house in Queen Anne Street, near to Mr. Fitzherbert's; his father in-law, Dr. Nugent, who had removed to London, lived with him, and, for the seven following years, until his removal to Beaconsfield, they continued together a most united and happy family.

His predilections were undoubtedly political; much of his studies and writings tended to this point; the society with which he mixed served to confirm it; and the possession of an able pen, a clear head, and a latent confidence in his own powers, increased a prepossession which promised the readiest avenue to fame and power. A slender opening into public life at length seemed to offer.

Among the warmest admirers of his talents was the amiable and patriotic Lord Charlemont; a peer without pride, a man of fashion without foppery, a good scholar though never at a public school or university, a voluminous writer without courting the honours of the press, and a patriot with little of the leaven of faction. Born to a title and competent fortune, he laid his country under no contribution, and on most occasions gave his vote to the ministry or to the opposition as the puplic interests seemed to require. He lived chiefly in Ireland, not as a matter of preference, but from a sense of duty to the country whence he derived his birth and his income. He wielded many years after this time a tremendous military engine, the Irish Volunteers, at a moment of strong national excitement and difficulty, in a manner the most prudent and able. A patron and friend of literature, he sought and valued the society of its most eminent professors. No man was more popular in his own country, or seemed better to approach the model of what a nobleman should be in all countries.

Mr. Burke said many years afterwards, "Lord Charlemont is a man of such polished manners, of a mind so truly adorned, and disposed to the adoption of whatever is excellent and praiseworthy, that to see and converse with him would alone induce me, or might induce any one who relished such qualities, to pay a visit to Dublin."

His weaknesses were few, and would not be worth enumerating, had not some of them led, almost in the last stage of life, to an interruption of correspondence with his then celebrated friend. He thought that public virtue centred chiefly in the Whigs; he had too strong a jealousy of his Roman Catholic fellow-subjects; he considered the revolution in France as the dawn of rational liberty; he leaned to the question of parliamentary reform in Ireland, at a moment when he saw and acknowledged that its chief supporters entertained, as the subsequent rebellion proved, more dangerous designs; and he was too much of an Irishman to look on the contemplated union with England otherwise than as the ruin of his country.

By this distinguished character Mr. Burke was introduced in 1759 to another of not less notoriety. This was Mr. William Gerard (commonly called single-speech) Hamilton, a gentleman who, after a few able efforts in the House of Commons, gained more celebrity by afterwards keeping his tongue still, than many others by the most determined volubility. The son of a lawyer, grounded in the same profession himself, and bred at Oriel College, Oxford, he, in May, 1754, transplanted himself from Lincoln's Inn to the House of Commons as member for Petersfield. A brilliant speech eighteen months afterwards, followed by one or two others of less interest, made him a lord of trade in 1756, of which board Lord Halifax was then president. With this nobleman, created lord-lieutenant or Ireland, he proceeded thither in 1761 as chief secretary, shone off vividly on two or three occasions, returned to England in about three years, and, though a senator for the remainder of his life, above thirty years, his lips within the house were ever after hermetically sealed to public discussion. While he declined, however, to give the country his advice, he did not hesitate to take its money, having enjoyed the sinecure of Chancellor of the Irish Exchequer from 1763 to 1784, when it was resigned, though not without an equivalent, to Mr. Foster.

His talents were reckoned of the first class, his understanding clear, his judgment sound, particularly, as his friends said, on the first view of a question before his ingenuity had time to fritter it away in useless subtleties and refinements; his wit pointed, his oratory epigrammatic and antithetical, his conversation easy and agreeable. In composition he was laboriously affected, a literary fop of the most determined cast; for a stop omitted, a sentence not fully turned, or a word that upon reflection could be amended, were sufficient to occasion the recal of a note to a familiar acquaintance. What he uttered in public partook of the same labour. He was perhaps the only member of either house who ever wrote, got by heart, and rehearsed his speeches in private, previous to their delivery in the House of Commons. One of these, three hours in length, Lord Charlemont knew to have been repeated three times before a friend.

He possessed, however, a very useful faculty,—a clear insight into character, which, after the first introduction, made him cultivate the acquaintance of Mr. Burke, with a desire of attaching him to his own service. The appointment to Ireland opportunely offered for this purpose; it was settled that he should accompany him, partly as a friend, partly in the situation of private secretary, in which, as being perfectly conversant with the local interests, parties, and public characters of the country, his services promised to be of the highest value.

In March, 1761, the appointments were arranged, though the members of government did not reach Dublin till the ensuing October. Lord Halifax displayed so much skill in his administration, as to disarm and neutralise to any purposes of discord, the contending factions by which that country was then, and has been since, often kept in a flame. What share Mr. Burke had in giving private advice cannot now be known; he himself, as will be seen, speaks of "a long and laborious attendance;" and whatever were his suggestions, Hamilton, as chief, would naturally take the credit of them to himself. One of these, in conjunction with Lord Kenmare, is believed to have been the scheme of raising during a period of distress among the peasantry, six regiments of Catholics, officered by persons of the same persuasion, for the service of Portugal, which failed through the opposition of some of the great landed proprietors in the west of Ireland. That his abilities were considered of no common order, may be inferred from the fact of the intimacy formed at this time with Mr. Flood, Sir Hercules Langrishe, Mr. Monk Mason, Mr. Pery, afterwards Speaker of the Irish House of Commons and a peer, several of them old fellow-collegians, besides the friendship of Primate Stone and others, the chief men of talents and influence in both houses of parliament.

The opportunity afforded by this trip of renewing connexions of this class which had been interrupted by his stay in England, and of seeing all his old friends, was not neglected; he also made a visit of some length to Cork and its vicinity, and more than once to Ballitore. Mr. and Mrs. Shackleton in return, calling at his apartments in Dublin castle, surprised him on the carpet busily occupied in romping with his two boys, and used to mention the affectionate interest he took in their infantile amusements as a proof of an amiable mind, joined to what the world knew to be a great mind. Even to a late period of life he delighted in children, amusing himself with what he called "his men in miniature," frequently participating in their juvenile sports, and, while playing with them, perhaps at the same moment instructing their grandfathers, by turning from one to the other to throw out some forcible truth upon human nature, from the scene which their little habits, passions, and contentions afforded. It was no unfrequent thing to see Mr. Burke spinning a top or a tee-totum with the boys who occasionally visited him at Beaconsfield; the following is an instance of the same kind.

A gentleman well known in the literary and political world, who when young amused himself by taking long walks in the vicinity of London, once directed his steps to Harrow, about the time of the coalition ministry, when on a green in front of a small cottage, he spied an assemblage of such men as are rarely seen together; Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, (the owner of the cottage,) Lord John Townshend, Lord William Russel, and four or five others the most eminent of the Whig party, diverting themselves after, what was then customary, an early dinner. Mr. Burke's employment was the most conspicuous; it was in rapidly wheeling a boy (the late Mr. Thomas Sheridan) round the sward in a child's hand-chaise, with an alertness and vivacity that indicated an almost equal enjoyment in the sport with his young companion; who in fact was so much pleased with his playfellow, that he would not let him desist, nor did the orator seem much to desire it, till a summons to horse announced the separation of the party.

In the intervals of business in Dublin, he occasionally visited England on matters connected with his literary pursuits, which were not neglected. In March, 1763, when in Queen Anne Street, he received the reward of his services in his native country in a pension of 300*l.* per annum on the Irish establishment, through the interest, as he said, in writing to a friend in Ireland shortly after, of Mr. Hamilton and my Lord Primate." This boon was enjoyed for no more than eighteen months, when, from the unreasonable and degrading claims made upon his gratitude, it was thrown up with indignation. The particulars, as related by himself shortly after the transaction in a letter to Mr. Flood, have only lately transpired, and they are too honourable to the writer and too interesting to the reader to be given in other than his own words; they exhibit with what indifference a high and manly spirit relinquished a pecuniary favour, granted unconditionally, when its continued acceptance could be construed, however illiberally, into an obligation to future servitude.—

My dear Flood,

"I thank you for your kind and most obliging letters; you are a person whose good offices are not snares, and to whom one may venture to be obliged without danger to his honour. As I depend upon your sincerity, so I shall most certainly call upon your friendship, if I should have any thing to do in Ireland; this, however, is not the case at present, at least in any way in which your interposition may be employed with a proper attention to yourself; a point which I shall always very tenderly consider in any application I make to my friends.

"It is very true that there is an eternal rupture between me and Hamilton, which was on my side neither sought nor provoked; for though his conduct in public affairs has been for a long time directly contrary to my opinions, very reproachful to himself, and extremely disgustful to me; and though in private he has not justly fulfilled one of his engagements to me, yet I was so uneasy and awkward at coming to a breach, where I had once a close and intimate friendship, that I continued with a kind of desperate fidelity to adhere to his cause and person; and when I found him greatly disposed to quarrel with me, I used such submissive measures as I never before could prevail upon myself to use to any man.

"The occasion of our difference was not any act whatsoever on my part; it was entirely on his, by a voluntary but most insolent and intolerable demand, amounting to no less than a claim of servitude during the whole course of my life, without leaving me at any time a power either of getting forward with honour, or of retiring wih tranquillity. This was really and truly the substance of his demand upon me, to which I need not tell you I refused with some degree of indignation, to submit. On this we ceased to see each other, or to correspond a good while before you left London. He then commenced, through the intervention of others, a negociation with me, in which he showed as much of meanness in his proposals as he had done of arrogance in his demands; but as all these proposals were vitiated by the taint of that servitude with which they were all mixed, his negociation came to nothing.

"He grounded these monstrous claims (such as never were before heard of in this country) on that pension which he had procured for me through Colonel Cunningham, the late Primate, and Lord Halifax, for, through all that series of persons, this paltry business was contrived to pass. Now, though I was sensible that I owed this pension to the good will of the Primate in a great degree, and though, if it had come from Hamilton's pocket, instead of being derived from the Irish treasury, I had earned it by a long and laborious attendance, and might, in any other than that unfortunate connexion, have got a much better thing; yet, to get rid of him completely, and not to carry a memorial of such a person about me, I offered to transmit it to his attorney in trust for him. This offer he thought proper to accept. I beg pardon, my dear Flood, for troubling you so long on a subject which ought not to employ a moment of your thoughts, and never shall again employ a moment of mine."

It is difficult to read this without experiencing mingled feelings of admiration and contempt;—of admiration for the honest independence of principle of one man, contrasted with the unusual degree of tyranny and meanness exhibited by another. For, whether Hamilton pocketed the amount of the pension himself, which from his conduct is scarcely improbable, or exacted it from his friend in order to gratify a pitiful resentment by distressing him; the transaction is extremely discreditable to his memory. An intimate friend, who has written a short sketch of his life, appears to have thought so, for he makes no allusion whatever to his connexion with Burke.

The conduct of the latter became still more magnanimous by carrying the point of honour, or, as he emphatically termed it, "desperate fidelity," so far, that the story, though so well calculated to tell to his own advantage, never till recently found its way to the public ear, and this only, it appears, by the letter accidentally being rescued from the flames.* Yet even this honourable reserve was tortured into a handle for party misrepresentation; for it has been eagerly circulated, and with the same perseverance as other equally unfounded rumours, that this very pension, thus surrendered from the most upright motives, was sold for a sum of money to pay his debts; adding, by the same ingenious perversion of fact, that it was not surprising he had deserted his last friends, because he had deserted his first! Other rumours in the same spirit, and quite as true, were circulated respecting their union and separation, which, were they not sometimes copied into popular books where they may possibly deceive, would be beneath notice.

It has been stated, that Burke wrote Hamilton's speeches; and the fact of the latter remaining tongue-tied for so many years, in the presence of his old associate, and then professed opponent in politics, gave some countenance to the assertion, though quite unfounded in fact. On their quarrel, Hamilton is said to have upbraided him with having taken him from a garret; when the reply is reported to have been, "Then, Sir, by your own confession it was I that *descended* to you." Some apology is necessary to the reader, for repeating this silly falsehood, told of half a dozen other persons beside; putting aside the utter want of truth in the story or the reproach, Hamilton had too much of the manners of a gentleman, at least, if deficient in the proper feelings of one, to make such a speech, had the circumstance been true; and Burke too much spirit to reply, not by a pitiful pun, but by chastising the speaker on the spot.

---

* By one of Mr. Flood's executors.

The fact really was, that no interview took place on the dissolution of their friendship. Along with the inclosure to the attorney alluded to in the letter just quoted, was sent an eloquent valedictory epistle, which Hamilton many years after had the candour to confess, was one of the finest compositions he had ever read; it is not known that he showed it to his friends. It is also unknown what were the private engagements he forfeited to Mr. Burke, though the latter retained through life a strong sense of having been unjustly and insolently treated by him on that occasion. The real grounds of this quarrel verify an observation of the late Bishop O'Beirne, who, when a gentleman of some political consideration in Ireland, remarked to him, that though he himself had perfect confidence in Burke's strict principle and honour upon all occasions, yet others, who did not know him so well, were less inclined to give him credit for some unexplained parts of his conduct; "Believe me," said the Bishop, "if there be an obscure point in the life or conduct of Edmund Burke, the moment the explanation arrives, it will be found to redound to his honour."

The conclusion of the letter to Mr. Flood, as it exhibits the near view of public affairs, which Mr. Burke enjoyed even at this time, and relates some curious particulars of the ministry, is worthy of preservation.—

"To your inquiries concerning some propositions in a certain assembly, of a nature injurious to Ireland, since your departure.—I know nothing of that kind, except one attempt made by a Mr. Shiffner, to lessen the number of the ports of entry in Britain and Ireland, allowed for the trade of wool and woollen yarn of the growth of the latter country. This attempt was grounded on the decrease of the import of those commodities from Ireland, which they rashly attributed to the great facility of the illicit transport of wool from Ireland to France, by the indulgence of a number of ports. This idea, founded in an ignorance of the nature of the Irish trade had weight with some persons, but the decreased import of Irish wool and yarn, being accounted for upon true and rational principles, in a short memorial delivered to Mr. Townshend, he saw at once into it with his usual sagacity; and he has silenced the complaints at least for this session. Nothing else was done or meant that I could discover, though I have not been inattentive; and I am not without good hopes that the menaces in the beginning of the session will end as they began, only in idle and imprudent words. At least there is a strong probability that new men will come in, and not improbably with new ideas.

" At this very instant, the causes productive of such a change are strongly at work.. The Regency Bill has shown such want of concert, and want of capacity in the ministers, such an inattention to the honour of the Crown, if not such a design *against* it, such imposition and surprise upon the King, and such a misrepresentation of the disposition of Parliament to the Sovereign, that there is no doubt that there is a fixed resolution to get rid of them all (unless perhaps of Grenville;) but principally of the Duke of Bedford; so that you will have much more reason to be surprised to find the ministry standing by the end of next week, than to hear of their entire removal. Nothing but an intractable temper in your friend Pitt can prevent a most admirable and lasting system from being put together, and this crisis will show whether pride or patriotism be predominant in his character; for you may be assured, he has it now in his power to come into the service of his country upon any plan of politics he may choose to dictate, with great and honourable terms to himself and to every friend he has in the world, and with such a strength of power as will be equal to every thing, but absolute despotism over the King and kingdom. A few days will show whether he will take this part, or that continuing on his back at Hayes talking fustian, excluded from all ministerial and incapable of all parliamentary service. For his gout is worse than ever, but his pride may disable him more than his gout. These matters so fill our imaginations here, that with our mob of 6 or 7000 weavers, who pursue the Ministry, and do not leave them quiet or safe in their own houses, we have little to think of other things.

"I will send you the new edition of Swift's posthumous works. I doubt you can hardly read this hand; but it is very late. Mrs. Burke has been ill and recovers but slowly; she desires her respects to you and Lady Frances. Iulus is much obliged to you. Will. Bourke always remembers you with affection, and so does my dear Flood. Your most affectionate humble servant,

"18th May, 1765. "E. BURKE.

"Pray remember me to Langrishe, and to Leland and Bowden. Dr. Nugent desires his compliments to you, in the strongest manner; he has conceived a very high esteem for you."

Previous to this rupture with Hamilton, in the autumn of 1763, and in the spring of 1764, Mr. Burke visited Dublin again, on some expectations held out by the Earl of Northumberland, then Lord Lieutenant; and with Mrs. Burke and his son made a short stay at Ballitore, returning to Queen Anne-street, in June. His brother Richard, several months previous to this, had procured the collectorship of the Grenadas.

While in Dublin towards the end of 1763, Edmund received a letter from his old friend Dr. Sleigh, of Cork, recommending to his attention a friendless son of genius, who had proceeded thence to the metropolis to exhibit a picture, of which in his native city no sufficient judgment could be formed. This was Barry, the celebrated painter. Mr. Burke saw him frequently, examined and praised his picture, inquired into his views and future prospects, and, desirous to try his powers of mind, broached an argument upon a question of taste rather ingenious than solid, which the other boldly opposed; quoting in support of his opinion, and ignorant as it seems of the real author, a passage from the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful. His new acquaintance contending that this was a poor performance and no authority, considerable discussion ensued; at length Barry becoming very angry, Mr. Burke, to appease his indignation, confessed himself to be the writer, when the irritable but enthusiastic painter, springing from his seat, ran and embraced him; and as a more unequivocal proof of admiration for the volume in dispute, produced a copy of it, which he had transcribed with his own hand.

The kindness of Mr. Burke did not stop at mere acquaintance and advice; for, though possessing but slender means himself, and with quite sufficient claims upon them, he had too much goodness of heart, and too sincere sympathy with unfriended talents, to see them sink into hopeless neglect and poverty without at least giving them a chance for reward. No opportunities for improvement existing in Dublin, he offered the artist a passage to England with Mr. Richard Burke, just then returned from the West Indies, received him at his house in Queen Anne-street, introduced him to the principal artists, and procured employment for him to copy pictures under Athenian Stuart, till a change in his own circumstances enabled him to do still more.

Whenever Parliament was sitting, Mr. Burke was observed to be a frequent attendant in the gallery, storing up those practical observations on public business and debate, soon to be drawn forth for active use. Most of his hours of study, as he frequently said afterwards, were devoted to a minute acquaintance with the principles and workings of the British Constitution. The next object in his eyes was our commerce; these alone, he said, had made us what we were—a free and a great nation; and these he had spared no time, no labour, no sacrifice, thoroughly to understand, and for these alone had well earned his subsequent pension before he put his foot in the House of Commons. It is certain that he was the first who rendered the principles and many of the details of commerce generally intelligible in that assembly. Dr. Johnson was proud to be told a few years afterwards, by an excellent judge, the 'omniscient' Jackson, that there was more good sense about trade in the account of his journey to the Western Islands of Scotland, than would be heard for a whole year in Parliament, except from Burke.

In the discussions to which the peace and the proceedings of the Grenville Ministry gave rise, he is said to have taken a considerable share; and some letters which excited considerable notice, under the signature of Anti-Sejanus, were attributed to his pen. This may be doubted, or in fact denied. They might have been Mr. William Bourke's; but Edmund, in all the Annual Registers up to the period of his connexion with the Rockingham Administration, preserves a rigid impartiality, strongly reprobating the licentiousness of the press on both sides, and complaining (1764) that "character no longer depended on the tenor of a man's life and actions; it was entirely determined by the party he had taken."

Previous to this time, it has been said, and never denied, that he had disciplined himself in public speaking at the famous debating society, known by the name of the "Robin Hood." Such was then the custom among law-students, and others intended for public life; and a story is told of the future orator having commonly to encounter an opponent whom nobody else could overcome; this person, it seems, was discovered to be a baker, whom Goldsmith, who had heard him several times speak, once characterised as being "meant by nature for a lord chancellor." Mr. Murphy had some faint recollection of the anecdote. Tradesmen form no inconsiderable part of such assemblies; and as unlettered minds often think originally, though crudely, it may not be useless to one better informed, thus to seek exercise by beating down their errors. A circumstance almost precisely similar occurred to the late celebrated Mr. Curran, when keeping his terms in London.

A suggestion of Mr. Reynolds to Mr. Burke, between whom a close friendship existed, cemented by admiration of each other's talents and private virtues, gave birth in 1764 to the famous Literary Club, in imitation of the social meetings of the wits of the preceding age. No class of persons, perhaps, require them more than those who having little to enliven the solitary drudgery of the day, gladly fly to familiar converse in the evening with congenial minds. Here the wise may mix with the wise, not indeed to preach up wisdom, but to forget the follies of others in displaying some of their own. Here also were performed, without venting the undue personal animosity with unmeasured abuse of the criticism of our day, those offices to literature now undertaken by the leading reviews, in settling the claims of new books and authors. Literary enmities were then less general, perhaps, in consequence of men of jarring opinions and principles being brought more frequently together, and finding in the amenities of social intercourse something to soften the asperities of controversy. Authors, at present, associate more with the world and less with each other; but it may be doubted whether they or the public have gained by the exchange.

Among those of the club whom Mr. Burke much esteemed, and whose genius and foibles were alternately sources of admiration and amusement, was Goldsmith. They had entered Trinity College within two months of each other; the former, as related, in April, the latter in June, 1744; and though not then particularly acquainted, remembered each other afterwards as being known to possess talents, rather than for exerting them. Occasional meetings at Dodsley's renewed the acquaintance, about 1758; and in the Annual Register for the following year, his *Inquiry into the Present State of Polite Learning in Europe*, is noticed with approbation, as were all his subsequent writings.

Barring a little vanity, and a little jealousy, which however from the manner they were shown excited rather laughter than anger, it was difficult to know Goldsmith without liking him, even if the warm regards of Burke, Johnson, and Reynolds were not alone a sufficient stamp of the sterling value of any man. Humane in disposition, generous to imprudence, careless of his own interests, a chaste and elegant writer, who advocated the interests of religion and morals, and who combined with his exhortations as much of practical benevolence as falls to the lot of most men, he was worthy of such friends; at once a rival of their fame and of their virtues. An author by profession, he was characterised by the imprudences often attendant upon genius. He thought not of the morrow; the "heaviest of metals" was so light in his estimation as to be carelessly parted with, though laboriously earned. He and poverty had been so long acquainted, that even when an opportunity offered for casting her off by the success of his pen, they knew not how to separate. He lived too much in pecuniary difficulties, and he died so.

During the term of his literary life, which comprised no more than 16 years, he wrote much and always well, but chiefly of that class of productions intended rather as sacrifices to necessity than to inclination. There is enough indeed for fame, but much less than for our national glory and individual pleasure, every reader of taste will wish. His plays are good; his poems, novel, and essays, admirable: his histories, as far they go, infinitely superior to any others of the same description. Some persons, on account of the small number of his original works, have been inclined to attribute to him poverty of genius, forgetting the shortness of his career; in fact, no writer, of the age displayed more fertility and variety on any subject to which he chose to apply the powers of his mind. And it should also be remembered that he had constantly to write for present bread before he could think of contingent reputation; for, alas! of what use are the brains when not backed by the belly! He died too at 46; an age at which Johnson was little more than beginning to become known to the public, and after which that great writer completed several of those works which render him the pride of our nation. Had poor Goldsmith lived to attain an equally venerable term of years, there is no doubt, both from his necessities and thirst for distinction, that the national literature would be enriched much more than it is, by the labours of his pen.

CHAPTER IV.

Appointed Private Secretary to the Marquis of Rockingham—Success in Parliament—Gregories—Pamphlet in Reply to Mr. Grenville—Junius—Letters to Barry.

The moment at length arrived when Mr. Burke gained that opening into public life, which nature and the train of his studies had so eminently qualified him to fill.

Mr. George Grenville's Administration had become unpopular by the proceedings against Mr. Wilkes, by the means resorted to for increasing the revenue, and the supposed secret influence of Lord Bute, when the omission of the Princess Dowager of Wales's name in the Regency Bill then framed on the first paroxysm of that malady which subsequently so much afflicted the king, threw it out, as Mr. Burke, in the letter already quoted, had clearly predicted two months before. Mr. Pitt was then applied to in vain; that imperious, though able minister, scarcely permitting his Majesty to have a voice in the formation of his own councils. The Duke of Cumberland, esteemed for good sense and popular deportment, now undertook the formation of a ministry; and, by his express command, and through him the direct desire of the King, a division of the Whigs entered into office under the Marquis of Rockingham.

The body, among whom this nobleman now took the lead, though comprising the chief of the aristocracy of the country, presented at this moment, and for several years afterward, an unstable and heterogeneous composition. It was split into as many sections as a marching regiment on the parade; but having no other principle of a military body, exhibited only the irregular energy, when it showed any energy at all, of an undisciplined mob; a mass of moral quicksilver, without any fixed point of adhesion; the cuttings and parings of all opinions, jumbled into a crude, vacillating, unintelligible whiggism; most of the members, in fact, a kind of neutral-ground men, so wavering, so undecided, so uncertain in their support, as almost to justify the wish of Mr. Burke, that, "he hoped to God the race was extinct."

The Marquis, the Duke of Newcastle, and their friends, forming the main body, deemed themselves sound Whigs; the Duke of Bedford professed to be a Whig; the Duke of Grafton called himself a Whig; Mr. George Grenville thought himself a Whig; and Mr. Pitt, if he hung aloof from the name of Whig, was so near to it in substance, that none but himself could distinguish the difference. Each of these had various shades of opinion, and some of their followers, as it proved, no opinions at all; while several, with Charles Townshend, seemed so eager for place, or unsteady in principle, as to be ready, upon the summons, to adopt or surrender any opinions whatever. Statesmen out of office are often in the unlucky predicament of being unable to explain, to the satisfaction of the people, their hair's breadth differences of sentiment with those who are in; and when they happen to succeed, do not always get as much credit as they expect for utility, novelty, or sincerity, in their views.

Lord Rockingham, doomed to be a leader of short-lived administrations, commanded general respect for the qualities of his heart and manners. He was not a great man, only perhaps because he already enjoyed the chief of the fruits of political greatness—almost the highest rank and the amplest fortune. But were there an order of statesmen set apart from the general class, distinguished for clear views, unwavering integrity, for a sound understanding and an upright mind, who aimed at no brilliancy, and were superior to all duplicity or trick, even to promote a favourite purpose, he would have stood at the head of the list. His knowledge and acquirements were all substantial. He had much for use, though but little for display. His rank in life affording an enlarged view of the political horizon, he observed keenly, and expressed himself in public, on most occasions, wisely and temperately. Never touching on the extremes of timidity or rashness, he possessed the useful art of knowing exactly how far to go, on party occasions, and where to stop. Whoever had him for an opponent had an honourable one, whom, if he could not convince he could scarcely disesteem;-and as a minister, none could have more unequivocally at heart the good of his country.

Through the recommendation of several friends, particularly Mr. Fitzherbert, Mr. Burke received the appointment of private secretary to this nobleman, July 17, 1765, just a week after the latter had been nominated to the head of the Treasury. "The British dominions," says a writer who knew most of the political characters of the time, "did not furnish a more able and fit person for that important and confidential situation;—the only man since the days of Cicero who has united the talents of speaking and writing with irresistible force and elegance."

By those who knew him intimately he was undoubtedly deemed a great acquisition to the Ministry; he, however, had not the same high opinion of his situation, having afterwards said, that of all the members of the party, he had the least sanguine hopes of it as a road to power.

The appointment had been scarcely gained, when misconception or enmity threatened to fling him back once more to a private station. No sooner was it known to the Duke of Newcastle, who had accepted the seals, than he waited upon the Marquis, over whom he had some influence, and told him that he had unwarily taken into his service a man of dangerous principles, a Papist, and a Jacobite. The statement was immediately communicated, in some alarm, to the accused. The latter at once admitted that several of his connexions were Catholics, but disclaimed that persuasion for himself and all the members of his own family, as well as every other part of the charge; and further, that his education and conduct while at Trinity College, and the tenor of his life after quitting it, were known to several mutual acquaintance who were at hand, and might be referred to, to disprove the calumny.

The Marquis saw so much frankness in the explanation, that he readily declared himself satisfied, but not so his independent secretary. He said it was impossible they could longer continue in confidential communication; for that the impression his Lordship had received would imperceptibly produce reserve and suspicion, embarrassing to public business, and so unpleasant to the subject of them, that nothing on earth should induce him to remain in such a situation.

Struck with this further instance of openness and spirit, the Marquis instantly assured him, that so far from any bad impression remaining on his mind, his manly conduct had obliterated every scruple, and that if for nothing but what had occurred on that occasion, he should ever esteem and place in him the fullest confidence,—a promise which he faithfully performed. "Neither," adds Lord Charlemont, the relator of the anecdote, and who personally knew the circumstances, "had he at any time, or his friends after his death, the least reason to repent of that confidence; Burke having ever acted toward him with the most inviolate faith and affection, and towards his surviving friends with a constant and disinterested fidelity, which was proof against his own indigent circumstances, and the magnificent offers of those in power."

By an arrangement with Lord Verney he came immediately into Parliament as Member for Wendover in Buckinghamshire, his Lordship, in return, being Gazetted a Privy-Councillor; and it may be remarked, that though the principal appointments under the ministry, and among others that of the private secretaries, are mentioned in the Annual Register of the year, his own name seems studiously omitted. William Bourke soon afterwards became under secretary of state to General Conway and Member for Bedwin in Wiltshire; sitting for the latter until the general election in 1774.

Seldom perhaps did a ministry succeed to office under more discouraging circumstances than that under the Marquis of Rockingham. Though of unobjectionable reputation, several of the members were young in office; they were scarcely popular, from being supposed to stand in the way of Mr. Pitt; they were not favourites at Court, on account of holding some principles at variance with those who were, perhaps, invidiously, called the interior cabinet, or King's friends; neither were they sufficiently united among themselves, either from previous concert or personal attachments, particularly after the death of the

Duke of Cumberland, who expired suddenly at a meeting held to arrange some of the business of the session.

In America, the discontents were become truly alarming, in consequence of the Stamp Act passed by Mr. George Grenville the preceding February, after being opposed only by a minority of forty in the House of Commons, and without either debate, division, or protest, in the Lords.

At home, the manufacturers and merchants were incensed at restrictions which threatened to destroy their trade. The country gentlemen of England wanted a productive revenue pouring into the English Exchequer, to relieve themselves from the burdens arising from the late war; and the colonies insisted that such revenue they could not, and would not, afford. One strong and popular party in Parliament declared it treason to the principles of the Constitution to tax America without her own consent. Another, stronger in numbers and in influence, declared it equally treason to the Crown and Legislature to surrender the right of taxation; and this eventually seemed to be the prevailing sentiment in the country.

With these irreconcileable interests and opinions to contend, the session opened for business on the 14th January, 1766, when Mr. Burke seized the first opportunity of taking an active part in the discussion concerning America. The details are not otherwise known than from a few notes taken by Lord Charlemont. Mr. Pitt, who professed to have no specific objection to the Ministry, though he would not give them his confidence, immediately followed Mr. Burke in the debate, and complimented him by observing, " that the young member had proved a very able advocate; he had himself intended to enter at length into the details, but he had been anticipated with so much ingenuity and eloquence, that there was little left for him to say; he congratulated him on his success, and his friends on the value of the acquisition they had made." Many of the acquaintance of Mr. Burke were in the gallery purposely to witness the first display of his powers, one of whom was Mr. Murphy; and they all, on his quitting the house, crowded round him expressing the greatest pleasure at the result, the praise of Mr. Pitt being of itself, in the general opinion, a passport to fame. After this he spoke frequently and at length, and again received some unusual compliments, the highest estimate being formed of his powers as a speaker.

Richard Burke, writing to Barry the painter, says, 11th February, a month after the opening of the session, "Your friend (Edmund Burke) has not only spoke, but he has spoke almost every day; as to how I shall leave you to guess, only saying that to a reputation not mean before, he has added more than the most sanguine of his friends could have imagined. He has gained prodigious applause from the public, and compliments of the most flattering kind from particulars: it will add to what I know you already feel on this occasion to be told, that amongst the latter was one from Mr. Pitt, who paid it to him in the house in the most obliging manner, and in the strongest terms."

A member of the club* who had treated him rudely on one occasion in consequence of being foiled in a literary discussion, and had found it convenient to absent himself, from the coolness with which he was received by the other members, expressing some surprise at his elevation, Johnson as promptly as prophetically replied, "There is no wonder at all. We who know Mr. Burke know that he will be one of the first men in the country." Writing soon afterward to Mr. Langton, Johnson said, "We have the loss of Burke's company since he has been engaged in public business, in which he has gained more reputation than perhaps any man at his first appearance ever gained before. He made two speeches in the House for repealing the Stamp Act, which were publicly commended by Mr. Pitt, and have filled the town with wonder;" adding in another passage the remarkable words, "Burke is a great man by nature, and is expected soon to attain civil greatness." William Bourke, writing in March of the same year, thus expresses himself, "You have heard that his (Edmund's) success has exceeded our most sanguine hopes; all at once he has darted into fame; I think he is acknowledged one of the first men in the Commons;" again, "Ned (Edmund) is full of real business, intent upon doing solid good to his country, as much as if he was to receive twenty per cent. from the commerce of the whole empire, which he labours to improve and extend."

---

* Sir John Hawkins.

The result of the deliberations of Ministry was to repeal the Stamp Act as a matter of expediency, but to pass a declaratory bill asserting the legislative power, in all cases, of the mother country. These, if Mr. Burke did not advise, he had a considerable share in defending, against a strong opposition which he subsequently characterised "as one of the ablest, and not the most scrupulous that ever sat in the house." Neither of the parties of which it was composed was satisfied, because neither of their principles were fully recognised. It may be doubted however whether a body of statesmen acting upon an enlarged system for the general interests of a great country, could have prudently done otherwise than they did. Wisdom is seldom to be found in extremes.

They took a middle course between the violence of Mr. Pitt and Mr. Grenville, who, it must be confessed, gave vent to much wild matter, not very consistent with political discretion, the one about almost perfect freedom, the other on the duty of unlimited submission. The phrase which Mr. Burke had applied to the former before he had the slightest idea of being connected with administration, of "talking fustian," might now be apped equally to him, and to his brother in-law.

Both laws ultimately passed, though the Ministry never recovered the shock they occasioned; even the members belonging to the Household voting with Opposition. The merchants, however, were pleased; the discontents in America sensibly subsided, and might not have been renewed but for what was termed the external taxation plan of Mr. Charles Townshend, adopted the succeeding year.

Among other popular measures, a resolution passed the Commons against general warrants; which, in the hope of other favours from his friend the Duke of Grafton, then a member of Administration, drew from exile the notorious Mr. Wilkes. He appeared privately in London early in May, 1766, accompanied from Paris by Mr. Laughlan Macleane, an old acquaintance of Burke, and determined, as he said, either to make his fortune from the fears of the government or to annoy it.

The Marquis, however, would not see him. Mr. Burke, accompanied by Mr. Fitzherbert, was sent as his deputy, when, after five different interviews, his modest demands to compensate for his sufferings,—viz. a free pardon, a sum of money, a pension of 1500*l.* per annum on the Irish establishment, or equivalents, were peremptorily rejected, with a recommendation to leave the country. The negociation, however, was conducted with such address and temper by the secretary, that, after a douceur of three or four hundred pounds, collected from the private purses of Ministry, this pattern of morality and suffering patriotism retraced his steps to the French capital.

Early in June Parliament was prorogued. Toward the end of the month negociations were on foot for a change of ministry, accelerated by the manœuvres of Lord Chancellor Northington, who, to discredit them in every way, sent back the commercial treaty with Russia, effected by Sir George Macartney after great difficulty, and subsequently admitted to be a very advantageous one, three times for revision upon very trifling pretexts. Of this William Bourke wrote an account to Sir George; who, through this channel, and also from his young friend Charles Fox, then about to quit Oxford, was much pleased to hear his address and skill in the literary compositions connected with the subject highly eulogized by Edmund Burke.

On the 30th of July, the Administration quitted office, without pension, sinecure, or reversion to any of its members, His Majesty to the last being extremely complaisant and even kind to their leader; no cause was assigned for the turn out, no political misdeeds attributed to them, except a supposition that they had delayed making a provision for the younger brothers of the King. The Duke of Grafton had relinquished his post in May. He also had no fault to find with his colleagues, but that they wanted strength, which he said could only be acquired by a junction with Mr. Pitt. To that popular statesman, therefore, the details of the new arrangements were committed, by an express intimation to that effect from His Majesty, who, in a manner, surrendered at discretion, by stating that "he had no terms to propose."

The difficulties which occurred in forming the new Ministry are sufficiently known to every reader of history. Having disgusted his relation and political associate Lord Temple, the Bedford, the Rockingham, and every other party, Mr. Pitt now created Earl of Chatham, seemed likely to have the cabinet to himself. Driven at length to his utmost shifts, by dint of cutting out reversions and pensions (forming a contrast to the system of his predecessors,) by harsh dismissals of some from office without known cause, by as unexpected offers to others who would have nothing to do with him, showing altogether a most perturbed state of mind, he assembled together a most motley group of stragglers, of which, seven years afterwards, Mr. Burke drew the following memorable and not over-charged portrait.—

"He puts together a piece of joinery so crossly indented and whimsically dove-tailed; a cabinet so variously inlaid; such a piece of diversified Mosaic; such a tesselated pavement without cement; here a bit of black stone, and there a bit of white; patriots and courtiers; King's friends and Republicans; Whigs and Tories; treacherous friends and open enemies; that it was indeed a very curious show; but utterly unsafe to touch and unsure to stand on. The colleagues whom he had assorted at the same board stared at each other and were obliged to ask—Sir, your name?—Sir, you have the advantage of me—Mr. Such-a-one—I beg a thousand pardons—I venture to say it did so happen that persons had a single office divided between them who had never spoke to each other in their lives."

Upon such a slippery pedestal did this eminent man expect to exalt himself to the gaze of the multitude, the chief, almost the only, character in his own picture. Either dictator, or nothing, had been for some years his motto; success and popular applause had in some measure spoiled him; he dreamt not of meeting with a superior; he could not brook the idea of having even an equal in office, for he had continually interfered in the details of the official business of others, when interference was neither delicate nor called for; he had hitherto loftily upheld the supremacy of his own opinions over those of all the rest of the cabinet put together; he would not condescend to conciliate or persuade any one, yet expected to govern all; though beyond doubt the most successful and popular minister which Great Britain ever had, his arrogance had repelled and disgusted nearly as many friends as his abilities or eloquence had ever drawn around him.

This disposition unhappily led him to care little for men or measures, except such as came out under his especial protection; and it is difficult for an attentive reader of the history of this period not to believe, that to this overweening confidence in himself, and impatience of any thing like equality of talents or power in others, the good of his country was more than once sacrificed. A junction with the Rockingham party while in office, would have assured present harmony with America; and their united good sense, penetration, and the recollection of Sir Robert Walpole's refusal to tax that country, might have eventually warded off that contest altogether. The Marquis, it seems, made the attempt to win him more than once, but found the truth of Bubb Doddington's assertion, that he would be "an impracticable colleague." His own scheme of a ministry was utterly hopeless. The former lofty dictator submitted to be neglected by the men of his own making. He sunk in a few months to the degree of a subaltern in the corps which he had embodied and naturally expected to command; measures being adopted with regard to America, (the duties on tea, paper, glass, and painters' colours,) in the very teeth of his opinions and declarations; exemplifying the truth of another remark of the eloquent advocate of the Rockingham party; "When he had executed his plan, he had not an inch of ground to stand upon. When he had accomplished his scheme of administration, he was no longer minister."

Mr. Burke, desirous to let the public know as much as he knew himself of the cause of the dismission of his friends, drew up in a few hours an original species of party manifesto, "A short Account of a late short Administration;" it blamed no person, made no lamentations, used no arguments, drew no direct inferences; but, simply stating in as few lines as possible the public measures of the preceding twelve months, left the reader to draw his own conclusions. This of course is in favour of the party, half concealing the character of a dexterous partizan, under that of a calm observer.

A sharper skit upon Lord Chatham and his colleagues, in the Public Advertiser, followed in a few days, in the form of a comment on the preceding, under the signature of Whittington, a tallow-chandler in Cateaton Street. It possesses keen irony and humour, was much read and talked of at the time, and has been always attributed to the same pen. These appear in the Annual Register for 1766. Another humorous piece given to him is "Ship News for 1765;" in these the allusions to the chief political characters of the day are happily hit off, and that of Charles Townshend particularly is, in brief, what he afterwards said of him more in detail.

Ten days only elapsed after the retirement of his friends, before he set out for his native country. The motives to this retreat, though "free to choose another connexion as any man in the country," do honour to his consistency. "To put himself," as he says, "out of the way of the negociations which were then carrying on very eagerly and through many channels with the Earl of Chatham, he went to Ireland very soon after the change of Ministry, and did not return until the meeting of Parliament. He was at that time free from any thing that looked like an engagement. He was further free at the desire of his friends; for the very day of his return, the Marquis of Rockingham wished him to accept an employment under the new system. He believes he might have had such a situation; but again he cheerfully took his fate with the party."

The office which he might have had, and which was indirectly offered, was that of a lord of trade; in his situation this disregard of consequence, of rank, and emolument, from a nice sense of honour even against the advice of his patron, as it was a rare sacrifice, ought to be considered a great one.

Mrs. Burke, his son, and brother, were with him in this excursion, which continued three months, visiting the little property left by his elder brother, who, as already stated, died in April the preceding year, Cork, Limerick, and some other places in the southern division of that kingdom, not omitting a short visit, as usual, to his Ballitore friends. A portion of his time was devoted to the antiquities and native language. Of the latter he knew enough to make some trifling translations, and about five years afterwards communicated to his old college acquaintance, Dr. Leland, who was then writing the History of Ireland, two volumes of old Irish manuscripts, containing several of the ancient written laws of that country in a very early idiom of the language, which he had discovered in London.

The condition of the Catholics, then suffering under the extreme oppression of the penal laws, and the damp necessarily thrown by them upon the prosperity of the country, drew much of his attention; it was in fact, as has been before hinted, a subject of early meditation; in 1761, and in 1764, it gave rise to frequent amicable discussions between him and Sir Hercules Langrishe, which, after a lapse of thirty years, were renewed with more advantage to the subject. The age was not then ripe for much liberality of religious feeling; he therefore prudently abstained from obtruding his opinions on the public until a more favourable opportunity offered; but the materials for a volume on the Popery Laws, an outline of which appears in his works, were at this time partially arranged.

The session commencing October, 1766, saw the Rockingham connexion nearly quiescent; a resolution that the land tax be four shillings in the pound, another for restraining the dividends of the East India Company, being carried against the Chancellor of the Exchequer; and with other evident symptoms of disunion in the Ministry, rendering an assault from without scarcely necessary.

The fame of Mr. Burke, however, as far as he thought it prudent to exert himself, continued to rise. William Bourke, writing about this time, says, "Our friend E. B. has acted all along with so unwearied a worthiness, that the world does him the justice to believe that in his public conduct he has no one view but the public good."

Lord Charlemont thus writes to Mr. Flood, April 9, 1767, "I some time ago sent to Leland an account of our friend Burke's unparallelled success, which I suppose he communicated to you. His character daily rises, and Barré is totally eclipsed by him; his praise is universal, and even the Opposition, who own his superior talents, can find nothing to say against him, but that he is an impudent fellow. Yesterday a bill was brought into the Commons to exclude the importation of Irish wool from certain ports in England, when Burke supported the cause of Ireland in a most masterly manner, and the bill was rejected."

The phrase "impudent fellow," though of course used here in a jocular sense, was in fact grounded upon a jealousy very general in the House of Commons, then more than at present, and which operated against Mr. Burke for many years, both among those who opposed him, and among those who stood in the same ranks with himself, of deeming it a species of presumption in men without parliamentary weight to assume the lead. He was not merely new to the House, but in a manner new to the country, and being without the essential adjuncts of commanding wealth or connexion, was almost regarded in the light of one who usurps a station he has no proper claim to. It was a source of no ordinary wonder to all, to see such a man, not generally familiar to the political world, and without much known practice in public business, start at once to the highest eminence in that arduous pursuit; it was annoying to many to see their consequence overshadowed, their abilities, by the force of contrast, tacitly lessened, and an utter stranger bound at once over their heads from the retirement of private life to the imposing station of a first rate orator and accomplished statesman.

This success, on considering his extraordinary capacity and acquirements, was not, however, so inexplicable as it seemed. Scarcely any one, perhaps none, who ever entered the House of Commons, had laboured so diligently to qualify himself for the duties of the office, or united with diligence, so much genius and power to profit by his labours. His general knowledge was various, and of such ready application, that in argument or in illustration, his resources appeared boundless. He had carefully studied the ancients, and stored up what they knew; from the moderns he had drawn improved principles of law, morals, politics, and science. To these he could add, when he thought proper, the logic and metaphysics of the schools, with the more popular acquirements of poetry, history, criticism, and the fine arts; in powers of imagination no orator of any age has approached him; in prompt command of words, and in vigour of language, very few; in felicity, and, when he pleased, elegance of diction when he seized the pen, no writer of modern times. He had, in fact, enriched a soil naturally good by such assiduous culture, that it often threatened, and sometimes did bring forth weeds along with the choicest products. All this was accomplished, not in the quiet of affluence, but in the bustle of struggling for an adequate provision in life. "I was not," said he, in his forcible manner, "swaddled, rocked, and dandled into a legislator. *Nitor in adversum* is the motto for a man like me."

He was arrived, too, at the age of 36—a time when this multifarious knowledge was digested and methodised; when the useful had been winnowed from the chaff; when the mind of a man, if ever worth any thing, is capable of the most vigorous exertion. It was an age, however, at which, as experience has proved, few men, (perhaps there is not another instance) who enter Parliament for the first time, are destined to attain the very highest degree of eminence, either as orators or men of business. This of itself would distinguish him as an uncommon man. If the difficulty ever occurred to him, it was no sooner thought of than conquered, by an application that knew no intermission, and a zeal that no obstacle could subdue.

Respectable mediocrity as a speaker was as much perhaps as his friends, however high their previous opinion, could reasonably anticipate for him. To be distinguished there, is the lot of few; to become great is one of those chances of life barely within the limits of possibility. Neither is it likely that he knew the extent of his own energies. It is occasion only that elicits them from most men; and these indeed, were always at hand in the numerous and extraordinary occurrences of the late reign.

Before the prorogation in July, an offer is said to have been made him by the Duke of Grafton of a seat at the Treasury board, but clogged with stipulations to which he refused to accede. A hint of this seems to be dropped by himself in a letter to Barry.

"The measures since pursued, both with regard to men and things, have been so additionally disagreeable, that I did not think myself free to accept any thing under this Administration." A negociation for the main body of the Rockingham party to join the Ministry soon followed, but came to nothing, "because," says he, in another letter, "it was not found practicable with honour to undertake a task like that, until people understood one another a little better, and can be got to a little cooler temper, and a little more fair dealing."

On the opening of the session, 24th November, 1767, he broke ground against the Ministry in an impressive speech, condemning their general conduct, and happily ridiculing General Conway's lamentations for the recent death of Charles Townshend, and the loss of his projected plans for the public good; which, though none of his colleagues knew what they were, were rather absurdly stated as likely to remove the difficulties of the country. This step indicated irreconcileable differences of opinion, and in fact some resentment between the Ministry and the Rockingham party; three meetings to effect a union between them having taken place, but in vain; and then Lord Chatham had resorted to what was considered unfair means (some attribute them to the Duke of Grafton,) to separate the friends of the Marquis from those of the Duke of Newcastle. The Bedford party proved more compliant to his wishes; in a fortnight afterwards they coalesced with those in power, forming what was called the Grafton Administration. The Nullum Tempus Bill, the distresses produced by the high price of provisions, the restraining act relative to the India Company, and a few other minor topics, occupied Mr. Burke the first part of the session.

In March, 1768, Parliament was dissolved, the new one meeting in May, when he was again returned for Wendover. About the same time he purchased, for above 20,000*l.*, a small estate and agreeable residence, since burnt down, named Gregories, near Beaconsfield, in Buckinghamshire; the expense being increased by being obliged, much against his inclination, to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles, as appears by the following letter to Barry:

"Gregories, July 19, 1768.

"MY DEAR BARRY,

"My silence has been long and blameable, I confess it; I am really sorry for it, but I trust you will forgive us some inaccuracies in point of attention, when you are convinced we have none in point of real substantial friendship. Indeed none can value you more, or wish you better, than all the persons who compose this family. On the close of the last Parliament, I had thoughts, amounting almost to a settled resolution, of passing this summer in Italy, and had even made some dispositions towards my journey. The pleasure and instruction I proposed to myself from your company, were not the slightest objects of my tour, for which reason I wrote the short note, wishing to fix you at Rome. But I have been diverted another way. We have purchased a pretty house and estate, the adjusting of which has kept me in England this summer. With the house I was obliged to take the seller's collection of pictures and marbles. He was a considerable collector; and though I by this means went to an expense I would not otherwise have incurred, yet I have got some pieces, both of painting and sculpture, which you will not dislike. We are in Buckinghamshire, 24 miles from London, and in a very pleasant county. So much for our situation. In other particulars we are, thank God, well as to health, and politically just on the same ground, out of employment, but with a quiet conscience and a pure reputation. Will. (Bourke) and I are both chosen into this new Parliament. I think myself very unlucky in having lost one of your letters; they are all worth keeping. I do not know any that have more curious observations and better expressed. Your last observations on the improved architecture of the moderns, and its inferiority to the ancients, is truly curious, and I believe as just as it is ingenious. I am proud to have found it confirm some notions I have had myself on the same subject.

" As to the pictures which you are so good to think of for us, you will regulate them just as you please. We cannot say any thing precise as to sizes, because we have left the house in Queen Anne-street, where the doctor (Nugent) now lives, and have had only a temporary residence in town, taken by the winter. As to this house, it is hung from top to bottom with pictures; and we have not yet determined which ought to be displaced. So, as I said before, follow your own ideas; but by no means lose an opportunity of disposing of a picture which may make you friends or money, on our account.

"We hope to have some of your work when you come home. I am glad of Hamilton's opinion.—It cannot fail of being serviceable to you in some way or other. In the mean time I must press it upon you to live on the best terms with the people you are with, even dealers and the like; for it will not follow, that because men want some virtues, that they want all. Their society will be some relief to you, and their intercourse of some advantage, if it were no more than a dispelling of the unsociable humours contracted in solitude, which will, in the end, not fail of corrupting the understanding as well as the manners, and of utterly disqualifying a man for the satisfactions and duties of life. Men must be taken as they are, and we neither make them nor ourselves better either by flying from or quarrelling with them; and Rome, and the trade of Virtù, are not the only places and professions in which many little practices ought to be overlooked in others, though they should be carefully avoided by ourselves.

"I remember you wrote to me with a great deal of sense, and much honest indignation, on the subject of some quackish pretences to secrets in the art, such as Magilphs, and the like. We had much of the same stuff here. It is indeed ridiculous to the last degree to imagine that excellence is to be attained by any mechanical contrivances whatsoever. But still the overvaluing of foolish or interested people ought not to induce us wholly to reject what may be subordinately useful. Every thing is worth a trial; and much of the business of colouring, belonging to a sort of natural history, it is rather worth while to make experiments, as many as one can.

"Forgive my trivial observations. Your friends here, the Doctor, little Dick (his son,) Mrs. Burke, all frequently think of you. Mr. Reynolds and Barrett inquire for you very kindly. Indulge us with your letters as frequently as you can, and believe me, my dear Barry, with great truth and affection, your sincere friend and humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Direct to me in Charles-street, St. James's-square."

How the money was procured to effect the purchase mentioned in this letter, has given rise to many surmises and reports, owing to the utter unacquaintance with his family, early life, and pecuniary means, of every writer without exception, who has written respecting him. A considerable part undoubtedly was his own, the bequest of his father and elder brother; the remainder was to have been raised upon mortgage, when the Marquis of Rockingham hearing of his intention, voluntarily offered the loan of the amount required to complete the purchase. It has been said that he even tendered a much larger sum, which the delicacy of Mr. Burke declined to receive, accepting only what was absolutely necessary, and this upon condition of being repaid the first opportunity.

Honourable as the transaction was to the friendship and delicacy of both, the ingenuity of party abuse has converted it into an attack upon the integrity of the person most obliged: yet, the Marquis was undoubtedly under obligations to him, both publicly, and for some attention paid to the business of his large estates in Ireland, when in that country two years before; less disinterested men, indeed, would have settled the matter otherwise—the one by quartering his friend, the other by being quartered, on the public purse. To the honour of both a different course was pursued; and admitting that the money was never reclaimed, it did not produce a third part of the annual income which the Whig party presented to Mr. Fox before quitting him in 1794.

Several admirers of Mr. Burke have expressed their regret that he ever submitted to be patronised—that he did not rather seek the patronage of the public, and pass his life in what they call literary independence. This is sad drivelling.

Patronage, as in the instance before us, is only a speedier means of accomplishing that which can either not be done at all, without assistance, or done only after encountering many and serious difficulties. It is but smoothing the passage of genius to fame. No harm has ever accrued from it, but, on the contrary, much good; and though a man of talents, without such assistance, may do much, yet with it he is likely to do better and to do more. Why it should not be accepted, when no degradation is stipulated, and no principle abandoned, it is difficult for any but the conceited or the querulous to conceive: he who may have worked his own way to the gate of the temple of fame, shows more of pride than of wisdom to reject the hand held out to introduce him with greater honours to the interior.

Private patronage often precedes desert; public patronage only follows it. The former may sometimes arise from vanity, or the affectation of superior discernment, but at any rate it is kind, it is considerate, and will often do more for its object than the noisy and fleeting approbation of the multitude.

The *patronage of the public* is a high-sounding word, which in truth means nothing. The public never, or almost never, patronised any one, without first having, in the language of commerce, value received; its countenance is never gratuitous; it must be purchased by previous service, by excelling, by exhibiting superior capacity and power in some particular way, whether in matters of utility, instruction, or delight, before the reward is ever given. Benefits thus paid for before-hand by genius, cannot be called patronage.

As to the literary independence spoken of, it is more difficult to be defined, except it be the liberty to labour much and to enjoy little, to be talked of but not rewarded, to glare in the world by the brilliancy of your writings, and to die possibly in personal obscurity and poverty. Even Johnson might have written his fingers off without being the nearer to independence, had it not been for the kindness of Lord Bute, whose name for this alone, if for nothing else, ought to be respected by every lover of worth and talents.

As to honours awarded to eminent authorship, such a thing, though common in every other country of Europe, was never heard of in England, till His present Majesty most graciously and liberally bestowed them upon a distinguished poet, for merits purely literary. Remembering these circumstances, let us hear no more lamentations about Mr. Burke's deserting literature for politics.

The aspect of affairs on the opening of the session, November 8th, 1768, seemed not a little threatening. Remonstrances, petitions, and non-importation agreements, seconded by strong private representations to men of influence here, daily arrived from America, which, on the motion for the address, brought out some severe comments from Mr. Burke, on the conduct of Ministers to that country; their passiveness in the invasion of Corsica, and on some other popular topics of the time. Another conspicuous and constitutional effort was on the injustice, sanctioned by a new bill of bringing Americans guilty of treason in their own country to England for trial. It is much to be regretted that no report of the speeches of this period is preserved. Mr. Burke's are chiefly known from contemporary verbal report, and from being marked in some books, as "masterly," "ingenious and able," "very eloquent and witty," and many similar phrases, but little or no detail is given, and this rather in the witty sallies than in the argument; so that the fault of the reporter has been unjustly laid to the speaker. Lord Chatham at length resigned. With difficulties thickening round the Ministry, an old and troublesome performer, scarcely less alarming to his friends than to his enemies, appeared upon the scene. This was Mr. Wilkes, again reduced to his last shilling, who, thriving by no other trade but patriotism, found it necessary to invite persecution in order to extract money, and, suddenly appearing from Italy as candidate for London, and then for Middlesex, with an outlawry hanging over his head, unexpectedly gained the election.

The vacillation of Government, the legal proceedings, riots, and general ferment which ensued, require no other notice than for the employment they gave to Mr. Burke and Mr. Grenville, the leaders of the two divisions of the Opposition, who, agreeing in this, had few other points of union. The question of the patriot's expulsion, so memorable in the history of the country, was carried, against the strenuous exertions of both, the 3d of February, 1769. A motion for an inquiry into the affair in St. George's fields, by Mr. Burke was negatived by a great majority; Mr. Wilke's affairs and America afforded him fruitful themes for every week of the session; and, along with several other gentlemen of Buckinghamshire, he presented a petition to the King, at the levee, against the decision of the House of Commons.

Toward the close of it, an argument on the taxation of the colonies occurred between him and Mr. Grenville, which evinced that the latter, with four years' experience had gained no increase of wisdom on the imprudence and impracticability of that measure. "He behaves," said Dr. Franklin, writing of Mr. G. shortly before this, "as if a little out of his head on the article of America, which he brings into every debate without rhyme or reason; tiring every body, even his own friends, with harangues about and against America."

An appeal by Mr. Grenville to the country generally, through the medium of the press, shortly after this, brought the rival leaders more immediately before the public. It was in a pamphlet entitled, "The Present State of the Nation," written either by himself, or by Mr. Knox, a former Secretary of his, under his eye, and which, without formally mentioning names, was designed to praise his own and Lord Bute's measures, and censure those of Lord Rockingham.

The reply of Mr. Burke, in "Observations" on the preceding, his first avowed political pamphlet, and little inferior to any that followed it, displayed the danger of attacking, at his own weapons, a writer so accomplished. He convicts his opponent of inconclusive reasoning, of inaccuracy in many parts of his subject, and of ignorance as to facts and details on the great principles of commerce and revenue, on which Mr. Grenville particularly plumed himself; altogether it gives us a strong impression of what a poor figure an active minister and debater in the House of Commons may make with his pen. A remarkable passage in Mr. Burke's reply on the then financial condition of France, of which Mr. Grenville seemed to know little, illustrates what took place 20 years afterwards, and exhibits the length of view which his more gifted adversary applied to this as to most other subjects.

"Under such extreme straitness and distraction, labours the whole body of their finances, so far does their charge outrun their supply in every particular, that no man, I believe, who has considered their affairs with any degree of attention or information, but must hourly look for some extraordinary convulsion in that whole system; *the effects of which on France, and even on all Europe, it is difficult to conjecture.*"

About this time Junius broke forth, the champion of popular rights, with a lustre and power never excelled, and under a mask which time and the most prying curiosity have been unable to penetrate. If circumstantial evidence have any weight, in any instance, it is difficult to believe from the documents some time ago published, that Sir Philip Francis was not the man. But from the first the credit was given to Mr. Burke; and public opinion, after running the round of the chief men of the day, and scanning their powers, opinions, and conduct, has again and again reverted to him as the only one capable of writing those letters. All his private friends, and Dr. Johnson among the number, were of the same opinion, till assured to the contrary by his voluntary declaration; even many years afterwards, a print shown in Dublin, of the author of Junius, exhibited his figure leaning on a volume inscribed *the Sublime and Beautiful.*

Internal evidence, as far as regards the style, is not to be looked for, where the aim was such profound concealment. Nor in short compositions, such as these letters, laboriously written as they confessedly were, would it be difficult to adopt and sustain a different tone from that of a long work. They are, in fact, the best modes that could be devised for concealment; there is an unity of design in a letter, which offers little inducement to diverge from the point or topic with which it commences; the mind also being unexhausted by long application, continues fresh, forcible, and condensed to the purpose in view, and these qualities of precision and force may be considered the chief characteristics of these compositions.

It may be observed, that on all the subjects on which Junius dilates, by a specific and pointed attack, Burke and he agreed; while those on which they seem to differ, as the Rockingham politics, the measures of Mr. Grenville, and a few others, are gently touched; just sufficient to show some apparent difference of opinion, without any formal censure;—a plan just suited to ward off suspicion from an individual, and yet not lower his party in public esteem. Even the allusion to Burke himself, considering there are few names mentioned with approbation, means little. "I willingly accept of a sarcasm from Colonel Barré, or a simile from Mr. Burke." Such a slight, now that he was universally suspected as the author, might be politic, in order to divert attention from himself. If really meant as an attack, a more unhappy hit could not be made by any writer, who perfectly understood his own strength; for some of the letters, and many of the leading and admired points in them, are little more than strings of sarcasms and similes. Divest him of these, and though still a clever writer, he is no longer Junius.

A general belief has prevailed, and there seems no reason to doubt it, that this celebrated writer, whether Burke or not, was a native of Ireland. The style bears little resemblance to that of any English author, but partakes much of the wit, the irritability, the pride, the bitterness of invective, the imagery, the almost morbid jealousy and animosity, which marked some of the political contentions of the sister country, especially those in her House of Commons. He had also, it appears, some sympathy for the grievances of that kingdom, when no English politician threw away a thought upon her. Even the abuse of Scotland and Scotchmen, may have arisen from the same cause ; a feeling of rivalry between the nations having often prevailed, when pushing their fortune on the neutral ground of England. Smollett had assailed the Irish character in his works of fiction ; and Junius, perhaps, thought it but fair to pay off the Scotch with interest, in matters of fact ;—it was the only point on which Johnson and Junius agreed.

Mr. Burke spent the recess at Gregories, in superintending the repairs and alterations of his house ; and, in attention to rural business, proved as active a farmer as any in the country, being often in the fields in a morning as soon as his labourers. It became a luxury, he used to say, after the noise, heat, and drudgery of the House of Commons. In town he usually had a temporary residence during the sitting of Parliament, some of which were in the Broad Sanctuary, Charles-street, Duke-street, 37, Gerrard-street, and some others. Among his friends were some of the most distinguished men of rank in the country. At Mrs. Montagu's famous coteries, about that time in their zenith, he used occasionally to meet nearly all the literati of the three kingdoms, and the most remarkable characters in London.

Amid these engagements, and the labours of politics, a more humble friend was not forgotten, either in pecuniary assistance, or in letters containing the most friendly and enlightened advice.

His protection of Barry has been already noticed. The moment his own means became extended, by being connected with administration, he recommended him, seconded by the advice of Reynolds, to go to Italy for improvement, and, with William Bourke, offered to the best of their power to maintain him while there.

The painter set out in October, 1765, and remained abroad above five years. During the whole of this time he earned nothing for himself, and received no supplies from any other person than his two generous friends, who fulfilled their promise amid serious difficulties and claims of their own, in which William, in one of his letters, was obliged to confess, that "cash was not so plentiful as he could wish." A fact of this kind, so rarely imitated by the highest rank, or the greatest wealth, speaks more for the virtues of the heart than a volume of panegyric; it is, however, only one instance among many of the benevolence of Mr. Burke.

Barry felt the weight of his obligations. Of Dr. Sleigh, he said, "He first put me upon Mr. Burke, who has been, under God, all in all to me." Writing to the Doctor himself, he says, "To your goodness I owe Mr. Burke and his family, which, in one word, is owing you all that is essential to me." To Mr. Burke he writes, "I am your property." And again, "you ought surely to be free with a man of your own making, who has found in you father, brother, friend, every thing."

A constant correspondence with their protégé was maintained by the whole family, chiefly, however, through William, as being less occupied in business; but occasionally with Edmund, who addresses him with the affection of a brother, and whose remarks and admonitions are so fine in themselves, and display such an intimate acquaintance with the arts and with the world, couched in the most eloquent style, that it would be a crime equally against his reputation, and against the enjoyment of the reader, not to give two or three of the principal, in addition to the one already quoted. The first was written while the artist remained in Paris; the others when he was at Rome.

"My dear Barry,

"I hope your kindness and partiality to me will induce you to give the most favourable construction to my long silence. I assure you that disregard and inattention to you had not the smallest share in it. I love you and esteem you, as I always did ever since I knew you; and I wish your welfare and your credit (which is the best gift of Providence in the way of fortune) as much as any man; and am much pleased with the step I hear you are taking to advance them. Mr. Macleane, your very good friend, tells me that you are preparing to set out for Italy. As to what regards you personally, I have only to advise, that you would not live in a poor or unequal manner, but plentifully, upon the best things, and as nearly as you can in the ordinary method of other people.

"Singularity in diet is in general, I believe, unwholesome: your friend the Doctor is in that way of thinking. I mention this, as Macleane tells me you have been ill, by ordering your diet on a plan of your own. I shall be happy in hearing that you are thoroughly recovered, and ready to proceed on your journey with alacrity and spirit.

"With regard to your studies, you know, my dear Barry, my opinion. I do not choose to lecture you to death; but to say all I can in a few words, it will not do for a man qualified like you to be a connoisseur and a sketcher.—You must be an artist; and this you cannot be but by drawing with the last degree of noble correctness. Until you can draw beauty with the last degree of truth and precision, you will not consider yourself possessed of that faculty. This power will not hinder you from passing to the great style when you please; if your character should, as I imagine it will, lead you to that style in preference to the other. But no man can draw perfectly that cannot draw beauty. My dear Barry, I repeat it again and again, leave off sketching. Whatever you do, finish it. Your letters are very kind in remembering us; and surely as to the criticisms of every kind, admirable. Reynolds likes them exceedingly. He conceives extraordinary hopes of you, and recommends, above all things, to you the continual study of the *Capella Sustina*, in which are the greatest works of Michael Angelo. He says he will be mistaken, if that painter does not become your great favourite. Let me entreat that you will overcome that unfortunate delicacy that attends you, and that you will go through a full course of anatomy with the knife in your hand. You will never be able thoroughly to supply the omission of this by any other method.

" The public exhibition is, I think, much the best that we have had. West has two pieces, which would give you great hopes of him: I confess, some time ago, I had not any that were very sanguine; but in these he has really done considerable things. Barrett inquires very kindly for you—he makes a very good figure in this exhibition."

"MY DEAR BARRY,

" I am greatly in arrear to you on account of correspondence; but not, I assure you, on account of regard, esteem, and sincere good wishes. My mind followed you to Paris, through your Alpine journey, and to Rome; you are an admirable painter with your pen as well as with your pencil; every one to whom I showed your letters felt an interest in your little adventures, as well as a satisfaction in your description; because there is not only a taste, but a feeling in what you observe, something that shows you have an heart; and I would have you by all means keep it. I thank you for Alexander; Reynolds sets an high esteem on it, he thinks it admirably drawn, and with great spirit. He had it at his house for some time, and returned it in a very fine frame; and it at present makes a capital ornament of our little dining-room between the two doors. At Rome you are, I suppose, even still so much agitated by the profusion of fine things on every side of you, that you have hardly had time to sit down to methodical and regular study. When you do, you will certainly select the best parts of the best things, and attach yourself to them wholly. You, whose letter would be the best direction in the world to any other painter, want none yourself from me who know little of the matter. But as you were always indulgent enough to bear my humour under the name of advice, you will permit me now, my dear Barry, once more to wish you, in the beginning at least, to contract the circle of your studies. The extent and rapidity of your mind carries you to too great a diversity of things, and to the completion of a whole before you are quite master of the parts, in a degree equal to the dignity of your ideas. This disposition arises from a generous impatience, which is a fault almost characteristic of great genius. But it is a fault nevertheless, and one which I am sure you will correct, when you consider that there is a great deal of mechanic in your profession, in which, however, the distinctive part of the art consists, and without which the first ideas can only make a good critic, not a painter.

"I confess I am not much desirous of your composing many pieces, for some time at least. Composition (though by some people placed foremost in the list of the ingredients of an art) I do not value near so highly. I know none who attempts, that does not succeed tolerably in that part: but that exquisite masterly drawing, which is the glory of the great school where you are, has fallen to the lot of very few, perhaps to none of the present age, in its highest perfection. If I were to indulge a conjecture, I should attribute all that is called greatness of style and manner of drawing, to this exact knowledge of the parts of the human body, of anatomy and perspective. For by knowing exactly and habitually, without the labour of particular and occasional thinking, what was to be done in every figure they designed, they naturally attained a freedom and spirit of outline; because they could be daring without being absurd; whereas ignorance, if it be cautious, is poor and timid; if bold, it is only blindly presumptuous. This minute and thorough knowledge of anatomy, and practical as well as theoretical perspective, by which I mean to include foreshortening, is all the effect of labour and use in *particular* studies, and not in general compositions. Notwithstanding your natural repugnance to handling of carcasses, you ought to make the knife go with the pencil, and study anatomy in real, and, if you can, in frequent dissections. You know that a man who despises, as you do, the minutiæ of the art, is bound to be quite perfect in the noblest part of all, or he is nothing. Mediocrity is tolerable in middling things, but not at all in the great. In the course of the studies I speak of, it would not be amiss to paint portraits often and diligently. This I do not say as wishing you to turn your studies to portrait-painting, quite otherwise; but because many things in the human face will certainly escape you without some intermixture of that kind of study.

" Well, I think I have said enough to try your humility on this subject. But I am thus troublesome from a sincere anxiety for your success. I think you a man of honour and of genius, and I would not have your talents lost to yourself, your friends, or your country, by any means. You will then attribute my freedom to my solicitude about you, and my solicitude to my friendship. Be so good to continue your letters and observations as usual. They are exceedingly grateful to us all, and we keep them by us.

" Since I saw you I spent three months in Ireland. I had the pleasure of seeing Sleigh but for a day or two. We talked much about you, and he loves and esteems you extremely. I saw nothing in the way of your art there which promised much. Those who seemed most forward in Dublin when we were there, are not at all advanced, and seem to have little ambition. Here they are as you left them : Reynolds every now an then striking out some wonder. Barrett has fallen into the painting of views. It is the most called for, and the most lucrative part of his business. He is a wonderful observer of the accidents of nature, and produces every day something new from that source, and indeed is on the whole a delightful painter, and possessed of great resources. But I do not think he gets forward as much as his genius would entitle him to ; as he is so far from studying, that he does not even look at the pictures of any of the great masters, either Italians or Dutch. A man never can have any point of pride that is not pernicious to him. He loves you, and always inquires for you. He is now on a night-piece, which is indeed noble in the conception; and in the execution of the very first merit. When I say he does not improve, I do not mean to say that he is not the first we have in that way, but that his capacity ought to have carried him to equal any that ever painted landscape.

"I have given you some account of your friends among the painters here, now I will say a word of ourselves. The change of the Ministry you know was pleasing to none of our household.... Your friend Will. did not think proper to hold even the place he had. He has therefore, with the spirit you know to belong to him, resigned his employment. But I thank God, we want in our new situation neither friends, nor a reasonable share of credit. It will be a pleasure to you to hear, that if we are out of play, others of your friends are in. Macleane is under-secretary in Lord Shelburne's office; and there is no doubt but he will be, as he deserves, well patronised there."

April 26, 1767.

"MY DEAR BARRY.

"I am rather late in thanking you for the last letter, which was, like all the others, friendly, sensible, and satisfactory. We have had a pretty stirring session hitherto, and, late as it is, I don't think we have got through three parts of it. The opposition to the present Ministry has been carried on with great vigour, and with more success than has of late years usually attended an opposition to Court measures. You know too much of our situation and temper not to see that we have taken a pretty active and sanguine part. You will rejoice to hear that our friend William has exerted himself two or three times in public with the highest credit. (An account is here given of his brother Richard breaking his leg.)

"The exhibition will be opened to-morrow. Reynolds, though he has, I think, some better portraits than he ever before painted, does not think mere heads sufficient, and having no piece of fancy finished, sends in nothing this time. Barrett will be better off than ever. He puts in a night-piece in a very noble style, and another very beautiful landscape, with a part of a rainbow on a waterfall. They seem to be both excellent pictures. Jones, who used to be poet laureat to the exhibition, is prepared to be a severe and almost general satirist upon the exhibitors. His ill-behaviour has driven him from all their houses, and he resolves to take revenge in this manner. He has endeavoured to find out what pictures they will exhibit, and upon such information as he has got, has beforehand given a poetic description of those pictures which he has not seen. I am told he has gone so far as to abuse Reynolds at guess, as an exhibitor of several pictures, though he does not put in one. This is a very moral poet. You are, my dear Barry, very kind in the offers to copy some capital picture for me; and you may be sure that a picture which united yours to Raphael's efforts would be particularly agreeable to us all. I may one time or other lay this tax upon your friendship; but at present I must defer putting you to the trouble of such laborious copies. Because, until we have got another house, it will be impossible for me to let you know what size will suit me. Indeed, in our present house (Queen Anne-street,) the best picture of any tolerable size would embarrass me. Pray let me hear from you as often as your can; your letters are most acceptable to us. All your friends here continue to love and constantly to inquire after you. Adieu, dear Barry, and believe me most sincerely yours,

"E. BURKE."

August 24, 1767.

"MY DEAR BARRY,

"It is with shame I find myself so late in answering a letter which gave me such sincere pleasure as your last. Whatever you may think of my delay, be persuaded that no want of regard for you had the least share in it. We all remember you with much esteem and affection; and I hope we are not, any of us, of a character to forget our friends, because they are fifteen hundred miles distance from us, and away a year or two. I did indeed strongly flatter myself that Will. and I might probably have taken a trip to Rome in the recess. But the session ran to an unusual and mortifying length; and as soon as it closed, a political negociation, for bringing my Lord Rockingham to the Administration, was opened, and thus our summer insensibly slid away; and it became impossible for me, either in his company, or alone, to begin an enterprise that would demand four good months at least. The mention I have made of this negotiation has, I dare say, put you a little in a flutter.*.... At present there is no prospect of a sudden change; therefore we remain as we are; but with all the content which consciences at rest and circumstances in no distress can give us. We are now in the country, in a pretty retired spot about three miles from town. Richard is at Southampton for the benefit of sea-bathing, which has already been useful to his leg, and he gathers strength in the limb every day. This is our situation. As to your other friends, Barrett has got himself a little country-house. His business still holds on; and indeed he deserves encouragement, for, independent of being a very ingenious artist, he is a worthy and most perfectly good-humoured fellow. However he has had the ill-luck to quarrel with almost all his acquaintance among the artists, with Stubbs,

---

* The sentence omitted here has been already quoted in another part of this work.

Wright, and Hamilton; they are at mortal war, and I fancy he does not stand very well even with West. As to Mr. Reynolds, he is perfectly well, and still keeps that superiority over the rest, which he always had, from his genius, sense, and morals.

"You never told me whether you received a long, I am afraid not very wise letter from me, in which I took the liberty of saying a great deal upon matters which you understand far better than I do. Had you the patience to bear it? You have given a strong, and, I fancy, a very faithful picture of the dealers in taste with you. It is very right that you should know and remark their little arts; but as fraud will intermeddle in every transaction of life, where we cannot oppose ourselves to it with effect, it is by no means our duty or our interest to make ourselves uneasy, or multiply enemies on account of it. In particular you may be assured that the traffic in antiquity, and all the enthusiasm, folly, or fraud, that may be in it never did nor never can hurt the merit of living artists: quite the contrary, in my opinion; for I have ever observed, that whatever it be that turns the minds of men to any thing relative to the arts, even the most remotely so, brings artists more and more into credit and repute; and though now and then the mere broker and dealer in such things runs away with a great deal of the profit; yet in the end ingenious men will find themselves gainers, by the dispositions which are nourished and diffused in the world by such pursuits.* I praise exceedingly your resolution of going on well with those whose practices you cannot altogether approve. There is no living in the world upon any other terms.

"Neither Will. nor I were much pleased with your seeming to feel uneasy at a little necessary increase of expense on your settling yourself. You ought to know us too well not to be sensible that we think right upon these points. We wished you at Rome, that you might cultivate your genius by every advantage which the place affords, and to stop at a little expense, might defeat the ends for which the rest were incurred. You know we desired you at parting never to scruple to draw for a few pounds extraordinary, and directions will be given to take your drafts on such occasions. You will judge yourself of the propriety, but by no means starve the cause. Your father wrote to me some time ago. The old gentleman seems to be uneasy at not hearing from you. I was at some distance in the country, but Mr. Bourke opened the letter, and gave him such an account as he could. You ought from time to time to write to him. And pray let *us* hear from you. How goes on your Adam and Eve? Have you yet got your chest? Adieu!—let us hear from you, and believe us all most truly and heartily yours."

---

* Daily observation shows the truth of this sagacious remark.

If these letters exhibit the writer's knowledge of the arts, sincerity of regard, wisdom of remark upon every subject he touches, and generous delicacy of conduct in taking off as much as he could the feeling of dependence from the mind of the painter by veiling the patron under the friend, the following is perhaps still more admirable for its keen estimate of the importance of temper and conduct to all men—for teaching the truest wisdom in the practical business of living, not merely in the world, but with the world. The occasion was the froward temper of Barry, involving him in frequent squabbles with his brethren at Rome; and it should be read by every wayward and contentious man the moment he rises in the morning, and before he retires to rest at night. It displays also, in a peculiar degree, the same prophetic sagacity which so often distinguished Mr. Burke; the prediction as to what the fate of the artist would be if he did not correct his peculiarities, being literally verified.

Gregories, Sept. 16, 1769.

"My dear Barry,

"I am most exceedingly obliged to your friendship and partiality, which attributed a silence very blameable on our parts to a favourable cause: let me add in some measure to its true cause, a great deal of occupation of various sorts, and some of them disagreeable enough.

"As to any reports concerning your conduct and behaviour, you may be very sure they could have no kind of influence here; for none of us are of such a make as to trust to any one's report for the character of a person whom we ourselves know. Until very lately, I had never heard any thing of your proceedings from others; and when I did, it was much less than I had known from yourself, that you had been upon ill terms with the artists and virtuosi in Rome, without much mention of cause or consequence. If you have improved these unfortunate quarrels to your advancement in your art, you have turned a very disagreeable circumstance to a very capital advantage. However you may have succeeded in this uncommon attempt, permit me to suggest to you, with that friendly liberty which you have always had the goodness to bear from me, that you cannot possibly have always the same success, either with regard to your fortune or your reputation. Depend upon it, that you will find the same competitions, the same jealousies, the same arts and cabals, the same emulations of interest and of fame, and the same agitations and passions here that you have experienced in Italy; and if they have the same effect on your temper, they will have just the same effects upon your interest; and be your merit what it will, you will never be employed to paint a picture. It will be the same at London as at Rome; and the same in Paris as in London: for the world is pretty nearly alike in all its parts: nay, though it would perhaps be a little inconvenient to me, I had a thousand times rather you should fix your residence in Rome than here, as I should not then have the mortification of seeing with my own eyes a genius of the first rank lost to the world, himself, and his friends, as I certainly must, if you do not assume a manner of acting and thinking here, totally different from what your letters from Rome have described to me.

"That you have had just subjects of indignation always, and of anger often, I do no ways doubt; who can live in the world without some trial of his patience? But believe me, my dear Barry, that the arms which the ill dispositions of the world are to be combated, and the qualities by which it is to be reconciled to us, and we reconciled to it, are moderation, gentleness, a little indulgence to others, and a great deal of distrust of ourselves; which are not qualities of a mean spirit, as some may possibly think them; but virtues of a great and noble kind, and such as dignify our nature as much as they contribute to our repose and fortune; for nothing can be so unworthy of a well-composed soul, as to pass away life in bickerings and litigations, in snarling and scuffling with every one about us.

"Again and again, my dear Barry, we must be at peace with our species; if not for their sakes, yet very much for our own. Think what my feelings must be, from my unfeigned regard, and from my wishes that your talents might be of use, when I see what the inevitable consequences must be, of your persevering in what has hitherto been your course, ever since I knew you, and which you will permit me to trace out for you beforehand.

"You will come here; you will observe what the artists are doing; and you will sometimes speak a disapprobation in plain words, and sometimes by a no less expressive silence. By degrees you will produce some of your own works. They will be variously criticised; you will defend them; you will abuse those that have attacked you; expostulations, discussions, letters, possibly challenges, will go forward; you will shun your brethren, they will shun you. In the mean time, gentlemen will avoid your friendship, for fear of being engaged in your quarrels; you will fall into distresses which will only aggravate your disposition for farther quarrels; you will be obliged for maintenance to do any thing for any body; your very talents will depart for want of hope and encouragement; and you will go out of the world fretted, disappointed, and ruined.

"Nothing but my real regard for you could induce me to set these considerations in this light before you. Remember, we are born to serve and to adorn our country, and not to contend with our fellow citizens, and that in paticular your business is to paint and not to dispute......

"If you think this a proper time to leave Rome (a matter which I leave entirely to yourself,) I am quite of opinion you ought to go to Venice. Further, I think it right to see Florence and Bologna; and that you cannot do better than to take that route to Venice. In short, do every thing that may contribute to your improvement, and I shall rejoice to see you what Providence intended you, a very great man. This you were, in your *ideas*, before you quitted this; you best know how far you have studied, that is, practised the mechanic; despised nothing till you had tried it; practised dissections with your own hands, painted from nature as well as from the statues, and portrait as well as history, and this frequently. If you have done all this, as I trust you have, you want nothing but a little prudence, to fulfill all our wishes: This, let me tell you, is no small matter; for it is impossible for you to find any persons anywhere more truly interested for you; to these dispositions attribute every thing which may be a little harsh in this letter. We are, thank God, all well, and all most truly and sincerely yours. I seldom write so long a letter. Take this as a sort of proof how much I am, dear Barry,

"Your faithful friend
"and humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE."

CHAPTER V.

Mr. Fox.—Pamphlet on the Discontents.—Parliamentary Business.—Character of the House of Commons.—Speech of the 19th of April, 1774.—Goldsmith.—Barry.—Johnson and Burke.—Election for Bristol.

THE address, in reply to the speech from the throne, the City remonstrance to the King, the affairs of Mr. Wilkes, and the discontents which generally prevailed, brought Mr. Burke forward almost daily in the session commencing 9th January, 1770.

The debate of the first day, in which he took a leading part, occupied 12 hours; and the second called forth an animated defence of his friend, Sir George Saville, from the censures of General Conway, for alleged violence of speech.

His most distinguished exertions were on the 28th of March, in favour of the bounty on the exportation of corn; when the writers of the time state him to have "spoken inimitably well;"—On the 30th of March, in support of Mr. Grenville's bill for regulating controverted elections, displaying great constitutional knowledge, drawing a beautiful distinction between faction and party, and strenuously urging the necessity for having representatives of the commercial and every other class in Parliament, as well as landholders, which some of the country gentlemen appeared by their speeches to doubt:—On the 9th of May, in proposing a series of resolutions of censure on Ministers, for their conduct in American affairs, introduced by a speech, said by contemporary opinion "to be full of sound argument, and infinite wit and raillery." Every speech he made, in fact, is highly praised, though the particulars, no more than those of other speeches, are not given, from the little attention then paid to reporting.

A circumstance, which subsequent events made of interest, took place in the debate on the address, when Mr. Charles Fox, in his first parliamentary essay, attempting to answer the objections of the Rockingham party, had some of his arguments successfully turned into ridicule by its leader. No offence was taken by the young orator. He had been taught some time before, by the literary society at his father's table, to think highly of the talents of Mr. Burke. He had known him personally since 1766, and they had been intimate for about two years; and further acquaintance insured to the latter that admiration from his younger friend, which all who knew him intimately involuntary felt. From an admirer Mr. Fox became a disciple, a coadjutor, an amicable rival; at length, by the occurrence of extraordinary and unlooked-for events, terminating, as he began, an opponent.

Of this celebrated man it is unnecessary to say much, and very difficult to draw an impartial character, without giving offence to his friends, or gratifying the spleen of a large body of political adversaries. Of powers the most commanding, and parliamentary talents the most extraordinary, he did not often exemplify, either in public or private life, the possession of that sound prudence and practical wisdom which insure public confidence and reward. Something of this was owing to natural disposition, something to parental indulgence, which left him in the most critical period of life wholly uncontrolled. His mind, manly even in youth, seemed to have reached maturity at a bound; between the boy and the statesman there was scarcely an interval. But there accompanied this early precocity an utter disregard of self-discipline and control, and an absolute tyranny of the passions over the judgment; the very excess of dissipated habits, his neglect of the observances of common life, his indifference to private character, which, even in his most popular days, made him an object of distrust to the reflecting part of the nation, all indicated an ill-regulated mind. It is said, as an additional proof of it, that he paid little regard to religion; if so, who but must sincerely regret it? If such be the inevitable result of early debauchery upon the character, it is, indeed, a heavy sentence upon frail humanity.

Yet his virtues were of the first cast. He was affectionate, mild, generous, friendly, and sincere; obscuring his errors so effectually, that scarcely one of his friends could see them, or could for a moment admit the uncharitable interpretation often put upon them by the world. Few men in public life, except perhaps Mr. Burke, have had more political enemies, though in private life perhaps not one; we might be displeased with the politician, but it was scarcely possible to hate the man. There was a good-natured, almost culpable, facility about his character, which frequently brought him into the society, and sometimes under the influence of persons, not only of inferior talents, but of questionable principles and views; and though without any community of feeling with these, or with the enemies of our constitution and government, it must be confessed that he occasionally gave such persons his countenance, so as to alarm the more cautious, the more circumspect, or more timid part of the public: but this was one of his many sacrifices to popularity, made at a time when it became necessary to strengthen his few remaining adherents by allies of every description. The same facility made him, in the opinion of many, a dupe to the plausibility of Buonaparte, in 1802 and 1806, and, at the former period, caused him to admit to his table in France a convicted British traitor, fresh from carrying arms against his native country.

The extraordinary powers which he possessed were chiefly from nature, and he often seemed to depend upon them alone without consulting the surer guide of experience. He had, of course, infinitely more of ingenuity than of knowledge, more of originality of thought than of patient research; more of decision than of reflection; he was more acute than discriminating; he was self-willed through life, obstinately attached to his own opinions, and undervaluing, though not offensively, those of the rest of mankind. He was heard to say, in the earlier part of life, that "he had never wished to do any thing which he did not do," and that "he considered advice an insult to his understanding."—In conversation he was backward and sluggish, seldom rising above mediocrity; in epistolary communication, common place; in historical writing, neither profound nor original; in debate alone, he often rose above all competition, especially in bursts of indescribable power; but as an orator, in the higher and more extended sense of the word, whose outpourings are worthy to live and will live, he was on all great occasions much excelled by Burke. The bent of his mind in politics, was to great things rather than to the more common; to what was imposing and theoretically perfect, rather than to what was useful and applicable; he caught eagerly at the bold and the splendid, at daring novelties, and plausible generalities, without sufficiently considering, or caring for, the difficulties opposed to their being carried into effect. No one knew men better in every-day life; but he did not so well know *man*, when placed in uncommon and untried situations.

A remarkable distinction between him and Burke was, that the latter, though educated like a philosopher, and often teaching with the wisdom of one, rejected all theory opposed to experience, in treating of the practical business of the state. While Fox, brought up as a man of the world, and always declaiming as such, appeared in practice often inclined to play the mere philosopher. Though equally grand in his views, he had not the knowledge, the caution, the penetration of Burke, to foresee their results. What he clearly saw, no man could better describe, but his eye did not take in the whole moral horizon; he was impatient of that labour of meditation and calculation which distinguished his celebrated friend and political instructor.

By many persons, his political life has been called a failure; inasmuch as he attained for no time that power for which he had all his life contended;—as the credit of opposing the American war was chiefly due to Burke as principal, and to his constant teaching and prompting;—as on the question of the French Revolution he was overpowered by the latter both at the moment of contest and in the ultimate results, and left a leader almost without a party, a general without an army; public opinion having then, and ever since, cast the strongest reflections on his political wisdom and general conduct.

Much also has been said of his opposition to the cause of America, to that of the Dissenters, to that of Mr. Wilkes, to the rights of Juries, and in fact to every popular topic between 1769 and 1774; of his coalitions, his sacrifices sometimes to popularity, sometimes to obtain party superiority, as indicative of continual inconsistencies of conduct; and that in fact Lord North made him a patriot by dismissing him with circumstances of personal indignity, from being a Lord of the Treasury.

Let it be remembered, however, that he was then young; neither let us press public men too hardly on the point of seeming inconsistency. They are believed by the people to sin in this respect much more than they themselves can admit, or conscientiously believe; and the reason is, that the change or modification of opinion proceeds in their minds gradually and imperceptibly to its completion, while to the public, who know nothing of the operation going on, it comes suddenly and unexpectedly.

But after all, is there any point on which a statesman may not conscientiously think differently at different times? Is there one who has all his life, in office and out of office, expressed precisely the same sentiments upon all the same subjects? Is there a man of any description whose opinions, on many topics, have not, at some period of his life, changed? He who says the contrary deceives himself, or wishes to deceive others. The human mind does not start into maturity at once armed at all points like Minerva from the head of Jupiter; it is progressive in the attainment of wisdom; and though the last actions of our lives may not be the wisest, there is as little doubt that men generally, as they advance in life, become wiser.

In this year Mr. Richard Burke re-visited Grenada. The domestic affections of Edmund, which were always particularly sensitive,and in this instance felt some alarm from the insalubrity of the climate, experienced alleviation in the promising progress of his own son, then at Westminster School, of whom, to the last moment of his life, he was as proud as he was fond. William Bourke thus repeats the usual praises of the admiring father, which some of his surviving friends will remember as being even then remarkably warm—"Ned's little boy is every thing we could wish, good in his person, excellent in temper and disposition, attentive and diligent in his studies beyond his years. He has read Virgil and Horace, and some prose writers. He has gone through about four books of Homer, and is reading Lucian with really a scientific knowledge of Greek."

A petition to the King from the freeholders of Buckinghamshire, praying for a new Parliament, in consequence of the odium excited against the existing one by the decision on the Middlesex election and other unpopular acts, was drawn up and presented by Mr. Burke.

A great effort, tending to the same purpose, and meant to point out the general errors of government, was his famous pamphlet, "Thoughts on the Cause of the present Discontents," brought out in this year; the most masterly thing of the kind in our language, excepting his own work on the French Revolution; a source of interest and instruction to every statesman, and a species of text-book then and at all times for the Whig connexion. It was not merely meant as an occasional piece, but for posterity, by the constitutional tendency of its general views, the depth and truth of its observations, which, with the eloquence of the style, impart that sensation of genius and wisdom characterising all his works. In this will be found the germ of the leading doctrines which distinguished him in after-life; holding a mean between the extremes of what were considered the popular and the Court doctrines. Of Lord Bute he speaks with a candour and moderation which scarcely any other public man thought it necessary to observe; the attack on the secret manœuvres of the Court, from a statesman labouring for power, indicated an unusual degree of political courage; nor did some opinions broached by the more democratical writers meet with more ceremonious treatment, for which the adherents of Ministry on one side, and Mrs. Macauley on the other, lost no time in attacking him. Against Parliamentary Reform he urges very ingenious and very solid objections; and his defence of party connexions has never been answered; putting to silence the hitherto common reproach applied to most public characters, of being party-men.

The "False Alarm," by Johnson, on the other side of the question, appeared not only without effect, but when compared with its opponent, to considerable disadvantage. No political feeling interfered with their private friendship. The good offices of both had been exerted towards the end of the preceding year in favour of Baretti, who had been tried for stabbing a man in the Haymarket by whom he had been attacked; when in consulting on the nature of his defence, Johnson's usual love of dictation, even to Burke, appeared in contradicting him with undue degree of warmth; an error, however, which he acknowledged with the same frankness; for on being reminded of his heat, he said, "It may be so, sir, for Burke and I should have been of one opinion, if we had had no audience."

The session 1770—1771 was a busy and important one, chiefly occupied by domestic matters. Never perhaps was party spirit and general disquiet more prevalent, short of actual disturbance; but of the speeches of Mr. Burke, though continually praised, no full, or even tolerably full, report is preserved from his entrance into Parliament till 1774, except, as has been suggested, they be found among the papers of Sir Henry Cavendish, who was in the habit of taking pretty copious notes.

One of the first topics on which he dilated, after attacking Ministers in the debate on the Address, was on the power of filing informations as applied to the case of Almon, who was prosecuted for publishing the letter of Junius to the King, which others had done with impunity. In this he characterised that writer in terms which first turned from himself the suspicion of being the writer, it not being believed that such a man would descend to praise himself;—comparing the letters with the North Briton, he termed the latter mere milk-and-water papers, and at another time, a mixture of vinegar and water at once sour and vapid.

To a motion by Serjeant Glynn for an inquiry into the administration of criminal justice in Westminster Hall, he gave his support, yet reprobated the asperity of reproach applied to Lord Mansfield, for which he was called to account in the public journals; and, among his papers is the draught of a letter addressed, or meant to be addressed, to one of them in explanation of the principle of the law of libel, and repelling the charge of giving more credit than he deserved to the unpopular Chief Justice of the King's Bench. Two bills, one for ascertaining the rights of electors in choosing their representatives, February 7th; the other those of juries in prosecutions for libel, March 7th, brought him vigorously forward in their favour; the latter, though introduced as Mr. Dowdeswell's, was Mr. Burke's own bill, which Mr. Fox copied nearly to the letter in his bill of 1791, without acknowledgment; the former even at this time anticipating the public voice by requiring that the jury should be judges both of the law and the fact. Fragments of his speeches on these subjects appear in his works.

The affair of Falkland's Islands furnished the theme of several others; one particularly before the Christmas recess, said by the reports of those who heard him to have been "in the highest strain of oratory;" and one in January equally distinguished for sarcastic ridicule; a talent in which he excelled all his contemporaries, and often exerted with striking effect. Opposition were much blamed for their intemperate conduct on this subject, but perhaps without justice; for it is now known that by a secret agreement between Spain and France in 1763, they had become pledged to a war with England to recover their lost credit and territories, whenever their finances permitted; and the necessities of the latter alone prevented the dispute from becoming the ostensible cause at this moment.

To this immediately succeeded the important contest between the House of Commons and the City Magistrates on the question of the printers giving the proceedings in Parliament, which, arising from the cupidity of a few obscure individuals, terminated in securing the greatest constitutional privilege gained since the Revolution,—the tacit liberty of publishing the debates.

Mr. Burke embraced the popular side of the question with his accustomed zeal and ability ; and when at length the house confessed itself conquered, by adjourning over the day on which Mr. Wilkes was ordered to attend, he did not cease to pursue their resolutions with reproach and ridicule. On the 2d of April, in company with the Dukes of Portland and Manchester, Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam, Lord King, and others, he paid a formal visit to the Lord Mayor and Alderman Oliver in the Tower. A proposition of Alderman Sawbridge to shorten the duration of Parliaments was with equal decision opposed by him as inexpedient and uncalled for by the sense of the country ; the substance of the speech has a place in his works.

In the spring of the year, Barry, who had executed two or three paintings for his patron while abroad, returned from Italy full of importance, of virtû, and of a more noxious disposition too often imbibed by long residence on the continent—an inclination to Deism. Mr. Burke immediately assailing it with the most powerful arguments, and a few good books, particularly Bishop Butler's Analogy, succeeded in fixing the painter's belief in revealed religion. It is a memorable instance of the envenomed spirit abroad against this distinguished man, long afterwards, for his opposition to revolutionary France, that among other slanderous accusations of the day, was that of having been given to deistical raillery.

His acquaintance with Dr Beattie, who had arrived in London during the summer, preceded by the fame of his " Minstrel," and " Essay on Truth," perhaps incited him more strongly to convince the artist of his error; the latter work he and Johnson praised highly for its support of religion in opposition to the sceptical metaphysics of Hume. Burke's opinion of metaphysicians is given with characteristic force in the letter to a Noble Lord, when speaking of the Philosophers of the National Convention :—" Nothing can be conceived more hard than the heart of a thorough-bred metaphysician. It comes nearer to the cold malignity of a wicked spirit than to the frailty and passion of a man. It is like that of the principle of evil himself, incorporeal, pure, unmixed, dephlegmated, defacated evil." Beattie's opinion of the science is not more favourable :—" It is the bane of true learning, true taste, and true science ; to it we owe all modern scepticism and atheism ; it has a bad effect upon the human faculties, and tends not a little to sour the temper, to subvert good principles, and to disqualify men for the business of life."

In September 1771, Goldsmith, writing to Mr. Langton, thus alludes to their friend's usual occupation :—" Burke is a farmer, *en attendant* a better place, but visiting about too." This better place was not speedily obtained : but two months afterwards he received the appointment of Agent to the State of New York, worth nearly 1000*l.* per annum, which, though it tended on all future occasions to give him the most correct views of American affairs, diminished perhaps the effect of his oratory in the House, and of his wisdom out of doors, from an illiberal surmise that his advice might not be wholly disinterested.

The next session, 1772, was short, and produced little of importance. A petition from 250 clergymen of the Establishment, and several members of the professions of law and physic, praying to be relieved from subscription to the 39 Articles, and called, from their place of meeting, the Feather's Tavern Association, he opposed against the opinions of several of his party, on the plea, among other reasons, that while they professed to belong to the Establishment, and profited by it, no hardship could be implied in requiring some common bond of agreement among its members.

For the same reason he ably supported a motion soon afterwards made to relieve Dissenting Ministers who neither agreed with the Church, nor participated in its emoluments, from this test; and it was carried through the Commons by a great majority, though rejected by the Lords. The Royal Marriage Act he opposed. A bill to quiet the possessions of the subject against dormant claims of the Church, introduced the 17th of February, found in him a powerful though unsuccessful advocate, on the same principle as the Nullum Tempus Act against dormant claims of the Crown; fragments of some of these speeches are given in his works. A bill for the Relief of Protestant Dissenters, to whom he always displayed the utmost liberality and regard, being introduced the succeeding session (1773,) he supported it in a long and most ably-argued speech, against some petitions of the Methodist body, who, schismatics themselves, deprecated indulgence to others, and were severely handled by Mr. Burke. His exertions on this and previous occasions touching ecclesiastical matters, exciting some suspicion of his orthodoxy among over zealous Churchmen, the delivery of the following passage in this speech drew very warm and general applause; an outline of the whole, which is well worthy of perusal by those who take an interest in the question may be seen in his works, vol. x.

" At the same time that I would cut up the very root of Atheism, I would respect all conscience; all conscience that is really such, and which perhaps its very tenderness proves to be sincere. I wish to see the Established Church of England great and powerful; I wish to see her foundations laid low and deep, that she may crush the giant powers of rebellious darkness; I would have her head raised up to that heaven to which she conducts us. I would have her open wide her hospitable gates by a noble and liberal comprehension, but I would have no breaches in her wall; I would have her cherish all those who are within, and pity all those who are without; I would have her a common blessing to the world, an example, if not an instructor, to those who have not the happiness to belong to her; I would have her give a lesson of peace to mankind, that a vexed and wandering generation might be taught to seek for repose and toleration in the maternal bosom of Christian charity, and not in the harlot lap of infidelity and indifference. Nothing has driven people more into that house of seduction than the mutual hatred of Christian congregations. Long may we enjoy our Church under a learned and edifying episcopacy."

In the summer, and again in 1773, he visited France, where Maria Antoinette appeared in that glow of splendour and of youthful beauty which, when afterwards depicted by his pen, drew the compassion and sympathies of Europe. All the chief of those coteries, since so much celebrated in literary history, were opened to receive him, but their prevailing spirit excited in his mind a strong aversion, and he formed but few acquaintance, some of whom were among the ecclesiastics.

Never perhaps were there seen together in one capital, at one time, so many men, and even women, of extraordinary intellectual powers. But the lustre which they cast upon every department of science and literature, was scarcely more remarkable than the perversion of mind which led them to despise the first and greatest bonds which hold society together. They valued every thing but religion; they practised every thing but morality; infidelity and vice were the only links of union; and the mass, splendid as it was, formed but a species of moral dung-heap, rotten and stinking at heart, but luminous on the surface by the very excess of its putrefaction.

Mr. Burke felt alarm and disgust at what he saw, particularly as it seemed backed by an equal antipathy to all existing institutions of the country. In the very next session of Parliament he pointed out "this conspiracy of Atheism to the watchful jealousy of governments; and though not fond of calling in the aid of the secular arm to suppress doctrines and opinions, yet if ever it was raised it should be against those enemies of their kind, who would take from man the noblest prerogative of his nature, that of being a religious animal. Already under the systematic attacks of these men I see many of the props of good governments beginning to fail. I see propagated principles which will not leave to religion even a toleration, and make virtue herself less than a name:" memorable words, indeed, when we remember their literal fulfilment.

Mr. Dyer, a learned and amiable man, a member of the club, and a valued friend of Mr. Burke, dying in September, he drew up a character of him for the newspapers. The circumstance would not otherwise require notice, had it not been for a rumour again strongly revived of their being both concerned in the composition of Junius's Letters; particularly on account of the great anxiety displayed by Richard Burke to gain possession of a small box of papers among the effects of the deceased, which he described as being of great importance to him, though of none to any other person. He received the papers, but the nature of the contents never transpired.

Nearly the whole of the next session was occupied by the affairs of the India Company, in which the labour of Mr. Burke in debate, and the extent of his acquaintance with the subject, were avowed by some of the Directors, Members of the House, to be very honourable to his industry. A commission of supervision was at length ordered to be sent out against all the efforts of Opposition, though Lord North did not hesitate to profit by a variety of other suggestions thrown out by its leader: he always professed admiration of his talents, and it was more than once said, would have been glad to secure his assistance, or his silence, on any terms that he chose to propose. It is certain that a short time before this, a question was put to Mr. Burke, through some of the leading people at the India House, whether he was willing to go out at the head of a commission for revising the whole interior administration of India. The bait, tempting even to a man of the most sturdy integrity, insured wealth without requiring renunciation of party connexion; but, again, his personal, and, what he thought more of, his family interests, were sacrificed to unbending principle.

"I attest heaven and earth," said he, in debate at the time, "that in all places, and at all times, I have steadfastly shoved aside the gilded hand of corruption, and endeavoured to stem the torrent which threatens to overwhelm this island;" adding on another occasion—"I know the political map of England as well as the Noble Lord (North,) or as any other person; and I know that the way I take is not the path to preferment."

The hold which he had acquired of public opinion, and the lead which he had taken in the popular branch of the Legislature, were the best evidences of his importance and powers, considering that in the latter no favour, scarcely toleration, is given to any man who does not by unquesed talents conquer his way to it.

The House of Commons is in many respects an extraordinary assembly. It is not only the leading branch of the Legislature, the immediate organ and purse-bearer of the people, the jealous guardian of the Constitution, the chosen temple of fame, as Burke himself termed it, the main avenue to honours and power, but it is especially the great touchstone of talents for public business. A man may often deceive himself or others on the real extent of his abilities for such employment, but he can rarely impose upon this body ; few know of what they are capable when they enter into it, and few come out without having found their just weight in the political balance. It does not therefore merely serve to make a man great, but if he be really deficient in the qualities of a great statesman, it is sure to render him little ; elsewhere it may be difficult to draw this inviduous distinction ; but there it is done silently though effectually.

It is in vain, from the number of jealous eyes, quick ears, rival feelings, subtle and powerful understandings, directed to all the proceedings of a member, that incapacity can hope to escape detection, or mediocrity seize the palm of excellence. A dull man will soon be neglected, a superficial one seen through, a vain one laughed at, and an ignorant one despised. There is, perhaps, no earthly ordeal for statesmen so trying as this ; and no abilities which, by passing through it with celebrity, may not be taken as sterling.

But in addition to these it serves other useful purposes ; it is the great purger and purifier of opinions. No person of moderate capacity desirous of being instructed, of gaining from the experience of older senators what they have partly gained from their predecessors, can sit there long without being wiser, or if not, the presumption is against his understanding. If he be at all open to conviction, new lights will break in upon him on most subjects of dispute; his prejudices, his preconceived and imperfect notions, be one by one removed, to be re-arranged in more perfect combinations elaborated in this school of practical wisdom.

Nor is it less serviceable as the scourge of political quackery; for a conceited or turbulent man, who may assume a high tone with the public at large, on the infallibility of his remedies for the national evils, no sooner goes there than he sinks into insignificance. The decorum, and the awe inspired by the place, commonly strike him dumb, and while silent he is safe; but if once tempted to give vent to his crudities, is instantly assaulted by the united powers of eloquence, argument, and ridicule; and beaten, if not out of the House, at least out of notice. Presumption and dogmatism, on public topics, deserve and meet with no mercy there; and schemes, which for a time mislead even sensible men out of doors, are no sooner touched by the Ithuriel's spear of the House of Commons, than their folly or mischief becomes evident. Yet persons are sometimes found even there wholly incurable; impenetrable to reasoning, and insensible to contempt, to whom the knife and the cautery are applied in vain; but the exceptions only prove the rule.

A tax on absentees, proposed in the Irish Parliament at this time by Mr. Flood, and approved by Ministry, drew an able letter, now inserted in his works, from Mr. Burke to Sir Charles Bingham who had expressly written for his opinion on the subject; this proved decidedly against it. Lord Charlemont and other friends to the proposal, were converted by his arguments; and being seconded by a representation to Lord North from some of the chief proprietors resident in England, caused the measure to be abandoned.

The general insubordination to all lawful authority at Boston, and the destruction of the tea sent thither because it was to pay duty, made the session of 1774 an important one, from the measures adopted by Ministry against the refractory port and province of Massachusetts. A general feeling prevailed here that some punishment was necessary. Mr. Burke, however, though unsupported by his party, declared decidedly against the Boston Port Bill, deprecating it in the most solemn manner, as partial, severe, unjust towards the innocent, fraught with danger to our authority, and threatening to bring the question of force at once to issue: "Never," said he, "did any thing give me more heart-felt sorrow than the present measure." This proved, as he expected, the great turning point of American politics; but, strange to say, scarcely another man of talents in the House viewed it with the same alarm that he did; another most memorable instance of his profound political penetration.

The other proceedings, in which he took a leading part, were in perpetuating Mr. Grenville's Election Bill, which was unaccountably opposed; the Quebec Bill, the bills for altering the government of Massachusetts, and the petitions to which they gave rise.

But the distinguishing feature of the session, and the greatest effort of oratory, as it was universally considered, which had hitherto been made in the House of Commons, or in any other popular assembly, was his speech on the 19th of April, on a motion by Mr. Fuller, who usually supported Ministry, wholly to repeal the obnoxious tea duty. He did not rise till the evening was advanced, and some members had withdrawn, who, on the report of his unusual brilliancy, hurried back to give frequent and audible testimonies of their admiration of his powers, though they would not give him their votes. The murmurs of applause in the gallery were only restrained from bursting out by awe of the House. It was on this occasion, after the delivery of a particularly powerful passage, that Lord John Townshend, who had retired thither with some friends, exclaimed aloud—"Good God! what a man this is!—how could he acquire such transcendent powers?"

The plain, practical, common-sense policy, recommended in the following animated passage, drew from Mr. Sampson, an intelligent American much in the confidence of Dr. Franklin a loud exclamation to a friend, who sat at a little distance from him in the gallery: "You have got a most wonderful man here; he understands more of America than all the rest of your House put together."

"Let us, Sir, embrace some system or other before we end this session. Do you mean to tax America, and to draw a productive revenue from her? If you do, speak out, name, fix, ascertain this revenue; settle its quantity; define its objects; provide for its collection; and then fight when you have something to fight for. If you murder,—rob; if you kill,—take possession; and do not appear in the character of madmen as well as assassins, violent, vindictive, bloody and tyrannical, without an object. But may better counsels guide you!

"Again and again, revert to your old principles—seek peace and ensue it—leave America, if she has taxable matter in her, to tax herself. I am not here going into the distinctions of rights, nor attempting to mark their boundaries. I do not enter into these metaphysical distinctions; I hate the very sound of them. Leave the Americans as they anciently stood, and these distinctions, born of our unhappy contest, will die along with it. They and we, and their and our ancestors, have been happy under that system. Let the memory of all actions in contradiction to that good old mode, on both sides, be extinguished for ever. Be content to bind America by laws of trade; you have always done it. Let this be your reason for binding their trade. Do not burthen them with taxes; you were not used to do so from the beginning. Let this be your reason for not taxing. These are the arguments of states and kingdoms. Leave the rest to the schools, for there only they may be discussed with safety. But if intemperately, unwisely, fatally, you sophisticate and poison the very source of government by urging subtle deductions, and consequences odious to those you govern, from the unlimited and illimitable nature of supreme sovereignty, you will teach them by these means to call that sovereignty itself in question. When you drive him hard, the boar will turn upon the hunters. If that sovereignty and their freedom cannot be reconciled, which will they take? They will cast your sovereignty in your face. No body of men will be argued into slavery. Sir, let the gentlemen on the other side call forth all their ability; let the best of them get up and tell me, what one character of liberty the Americans have, and what one brand of slavery they are free from, if they are bound in their property and industry by all the restraints you can imagine on commerce, and at the same time are made pack-horses of every tax you choose to impose, without the least share in granting them. When they bear the burthens of unlimited monopoly, will you bring them to bear the burthens of unlimited revenue too? The Englishman in America will feel that this is slavery;—that it is *legal* slavery, will be no compensation either to his feelings or to his understanding."

The reply to Lord Carmarthen, from its force, beauty, and readiness, excited a great emotion in the House. His Lordship observed, that Manchester not being represented, had as much right to complain as the colonies; and that, as our children, the Americans were guilty of the revolting crime of rebellion against their parent;—"True," replied the orator, "they are our children, but when children ask for bread, shall we give them a stone? When they wish to assimilate to their parent, and to reflect with a true filial resemblance the beauteous countenance of British liberty, are we to turn to them the shameful parts of our constitution? Are we to give them our weakness for their strength? Our opprobrium for their glory? And the slough of slavery which we are not able to work off, to serve them for their freedom?"

The merits of this speech are of a great and peculiar cast; a force and truth of argument, not to be answered—ornament not more than enough—an intuitive, straightforward wisdom, which, on all great occasions, seems never to have deserted him—a range of observation, which nobody else dare attempt without certain ruin to the speaker and to the subject—yet skilfully brought to bear upon the point he has in view. To this end even his digressions, his illustrations, his imagery, his narrative of measures, his exposition of our true policy, his appeals to experience, his graphic sketches of character, all forcibly tend. Nothing that comes in his way but is converted to use; every figure becomes an argument; and when seeming most to wander from the point, he suddenly wheels round and overpowers us with some new and formidable auxiliary to reason. It is, and indeed all his speeches are, a combination of all the constituents of eloquence, such as no other orator, foreign or native, ancient or modern, has been able to give us.

As a ready debater it added to his fame, much of it being uuquestionably extemporaneous; it was also the first speech which his friends could persuade him to commit to the press, and for this purpose he had the use of their notes. On the public it made a great impression; the censure of the opposite party was confined more to the manner than to the matter; and Lord North, though he negatived the motion, appeared so confounded or convinced by the reasoning of its supporter, that early in the next session he offered to repeal the tax, if that would satisfy America.

About the same time his friend, poor Goldsmith, died, having scarcely finished his pleasant poem of Retaliation, written in reply to some jocular epitaphs upon him, by the club at St. James's Coffee-house, and in which, as one of the number, the character of Mr. Burke, who, with Dr. Johnson, took the trouble to direct his funeral, is spiritedly drawn; though well known to every reader of poetry, it cannot well be omitted in a memoir of him whom it describes. Allowing for that exaggeration and sarcastic pleasantry, which the occasion called for, it would be difficult to comprise more wit and truth in the same number of lines.——

Here lies our good Edmund, whose genius was such,
We scarcely can praise it, or blame it too much;
Who, born for the universe, narrow'd his mind,
And to party gave up what was meant for mankind.
Though fraught with all learning, yet straining his throat,
To persuade Tommy Townshend to lend him a vote;
Who, too deep for his hearers, still went on refining,
And thought of convincing, while they thought of dining
Though equal to all things, for all things unfit,
Too nice for a statesman, too proud for a wit;

For a patriot too cool, for a drudge disobedient,
And too fond of the right, to pursue the expedient;
In short, 'twas his fate unemploy'd or in place, Sir,
To eat mutton cold, and cut blocks with a razor.

Of the lively and affectionate interest which Mr. Burke took in the success, both in life and in art, of his protégé, Barry, abundant proofs have been already given; but he soon saw, with great pain, after the latter had been resident a short time in England, that a peculiar temper and humours would in all probability mar, if not destroy, the effect of his undoubted talents. With many great and good qualities, few persons among his own art could live with the painter long on terms of amity; he was eccentric and peculiar; and scarcely any man who is so is agreeable to society; he had a harshness and freedom of expression in matters of opinion, which carried him further than he meant, and frequently gave offence, when offence was not intended; he had a mode of thinking and of acting of his own in all things; he had an utter contempt for money, yet was subject to the distresses which money alone could relieve, and felt the want of that consequence which, after all, money is one of the chief means of imparting; he had a great thirst for fame, but would not seek it on the terms which general opinion prescribed; he thought the world ought to conform to his views, and not he to the world's; he would not submit to paint portraits, and was, therefore, pretty certain of never arriving either at popularity or wealth.

A humour of his at this moment, which to some would have appeared like ingratitude, though this was by no means the case, had nearly produced a breach between him and his patron. The latter wished to have his picture painted in order to gratify an old friend; and calling frequently for this purpose, was always put off with excuses of prior occupation, or the necessity of receiving previous notice, which it appeared Mr. Burke, from his incessant engagements, was wholly unable to give. The friend in question at length, complaining of the delay, the following letter was written to the painter.

" Sir,

" I ought to apologise to you, for the liberty I have presumed to take, of troubling you with what I find an unseasonable visit. I humbly beg your pardon for the intrusion. My apology is this: My worthy friend Dr. Brocklesby, who has honoured me so much as to desire my picture, and wished to have it painted by you, complained to me, yesterday, that he has been two years desiring it without effect. I should be very insensible of this mark of his attention, and very undeserving of it, if I had not endeavoured, as far as in me lay, to obey his obliging commands. I have therefore several times, almost in every week since he first spoke to me (except about two months when I was wholly in the country, without coming to town at all,) presented myself to you, that if you were not better engaged I might sit to you. You have always been so much employed, that you have required a day's previous notice of my intention, and for that reason declined to paint the picture at the times which suited me. It has been very unfortunate to me that my time too is so irregularly occupied, that I can never with certainty tell beforehand when I shall be disengaged. No man can be more sensible of the insignificance of my occupations, but to *me* they are of some importance, and the times of them certainly very irregular. I came to town upon very pressing business, at four on Thursday evening; yesterday I had some hours upon my hands; I waited upon you, but I found improperly. Contrary to my expectation, a gentleman, who was to go out of town with me this morning, delays till half an hour after four o'clock; this gave me near five hours to dispose of, and which I was willing to give to my friend's wishes. I waited on you exactly at half an hour after eleven, and had the pleasure of finding you at home; but as usual, so employed as not to permit you to undertake this disagreeable business. I have troubled you with this letter, as I think it necessary to make an excuse for so frequent and importunate intrusions.

"Much as it might flatter my vanity to be painted by so eminent an artist, I assure you, that knowing I had no title to that honour, it was only in compliance with that desire (often repeated) of our common friend, that I have been so troublesome. You, who know the value of friendship, and the duties of it, I dare say, will have the goodness to excuse me on that plea. On no other should I deserve it, for intruding on you at other times than those you should please to order. Nobody, I flatter myself, regards that time more; and pays, and has always paid, a more sincere (though a very unlearned) homage to your great talents and acquirements. I must once more repeat my apology, hoping to obtain your pardon, on the usual plea of not committing the same fault again. I am, with the greatest respect and esteem, Sir, your most obedient,

"And most faithful humble servant,

"EDMUND BURKE.

"Saturday, July 9th, 1774."

Barry, in reply, professed himself much vexed at the misunderstanding, and hurt, by what he considered the ironical air of the letter conveying it, adding that other artists required more notice than that for which he had asked. The rejoinder of Mr. Burke exhibits his usual force and felicity of expression. He disclaims any ironical feeling, but a sincere and warm admiration of his talents; that he had been five times painted in his life—twice in miniature, by Spencer and Sisson—thrice in large, by Worlidge and Sir Joshua Reynolds, neither of whom had required any previous notice—and that he was then, as opportunities offered, sitting to the latter at the earnest request of Mr. Thrale, for another portrait, upon the same conditions as to time; and remarking that though being painted was one of the modes in which vanity displayed itself, he mistook himself much if it were one of the fashions of that weakness in him.—This disagreement, however, soon terminated; the picture was painted and had the reputation of being an excellent likeness.

Shortly after this, Mr. Burke finding Barry busily at work, when he called, inquired the subject, and was told it was a bagatelle—Young Mercury inventing the lyre, by accidentally finding a tortoise shell at break of day, on the sea shore: "Aye," replied the orator, with his accustomed promptitude, "that is the fruit of early rising, —there is the industrious boy! I will give you a companion for it—paint Narcissus wasting his day, in looking at himself in a fountain—that will be the idle boy." The picture was accordingly painted—In the following year, the artist presented a copy of his Inquiry into the Real and Imaginary Obstructions to the Acquisitions of the Arts in England, to the same great critic, who returned a candid and favourable opinion, in a note, dated January 15th, 1775, from the Broad Sanctuary.

Among other friends who passed a short time at Gregories during the summer, were Mr. and Mrs. Thrale, and his old friend Dr. Johnson; the latter after wandering over the grounds in admiration, succeeded by a reverie, exclaimed—

Non equidem invideo, miror magis.

Which, by some, has been construed into a passing shadow of discontent, at the superiority of his friends fortune. Johnson, however, had little of envy about him; and Burke nothing of the insolence of ordinary minds in prosperity, to excite it. For though now the leader of Opposition, the first by far in eloquence, second to none in public talents of any kind, high in fame, in confidential connexion and friendship with the chief men of the country, distinctions which operate on most men, they produced in him no alteration of manner. His table, society, and friendship, were as open to his less fortunate acquaintance as before. He had passed them by in the race of life, but did not neglect or despise because they were nearly lost in the distance.

At the moment of parting, when the hospitable master of the mansion was setting out on election business, another supposed equivocal speech escaped from the moralist as he shook him cordially by the hand.—"Farewel, my dear Sir, and remember that I wish you, all the success which ought to be wished you, which can possibly be wished you indeed—by an honest man." There is nothing ambiguous in this; now and then, it is true, he seemed to think that an honest man could scarcely wish well to a Whig, but *Mund*, as he familiarly called him, seldom came in for any share of this censure.—On the contrary, of his public exertions he said, "It was commonly observed he spoke too often in Parliament, but nobody could say he did not speak well, but perhaps too frequently and sometimes too familiarly;"

but such must always be the case with a leader of Opposition. Mr. Burke, with equal regard, defended Johnson's pension this session from the attack of his own party in the House of Commons.

These two remarkable men were perhaps the only persons of their age, who, in acquirements or in original powers of mind, could be compared with each other; they had been at first fellow-labourers in the literary vineyard; they had each ultimately risen to the highest eminence in different spheres; they preserved at all times sincere esteem for each other; and were rivals only in gaining the admiration of their country. From the first, Burke seems to have possessed a strong ambition of rising in public life far above the range accessible to mere literature, or even to a profession, though that profession was the law. Johnson's views had never extended beyond simple independence and literary fame. The one desired to govern men, the other to become the monarch of their books; the one dived deeply into their political rights, the other into the matter of next importance among all nations—their authors, language, and letters.

A strong cast of originality, yet with few points of resemblance, distinguish not only their thoughts, but almost their modes of thinking, and each has had the merit of founding a style of his own, which it is difficult to imitate. Johnson, seemingly born a logician, impresses truth on the mind with a scholastic, methodical, though commonly irresistible effect. More careless of arrangement, yet with not less power, Burke assumes a more popular manner, giving to his views more ingenuity, more novelty, more variety. The reasoning of the former is marshalled with the exactness of a heraldic procession, or the rank and file of an army, one in the rear of the other, according to their importance or power of producing effect. The latter, disregarding such precise discipline, makes up in the incessant and unexpected nature of his assaults, what he wants in more formal array; we can anticipate Johnson's mode of attack, but not Burke's, for, careless of the order of battle of the schools, he charges at once front, flanks, and rear; and his unwearied perseverance in returning to the combat on every accessible point, pretty commonly ensures the victory. The former argued like an academical teacher; the latter like what he was and what nature had intended him for —an orator. The labours of the former were addressed to the closet: of the latter, most frequently to a popular assembly, and each chose the mode best calculated for his purpose.

Both were remarkable for subtlety and vigour of reasoning whenever the occasion required them. In copiousness and variety of language, adapted to every subject and to every capacity, Burke is generally admitted to possess the advantage; in style he has less stiffness, less mannerism, less seeming labour, and scarcely any affectation; in perspicuity they are both admirable. Johnson had on the whole more erudition; Burke inexhaustible powers of imagination. Johnson possessed a pungent, caustic wit; Burke a more playful, sarcastic humour; in the exercise of which both were occasionally coarse enough. Johnson, had his original pursuits inclined that way, would have made no ordinary politician; Burke was confessedly a master in the science; in the philosophy of it he is the first in the English language, or perhaps in any other; and in the practice of it, during the long period of his public career, was second to none. Added to these were his splendid oratorical powers, to which Johnson had no pretension. With a latent hankering after abstractions, the one in logical, the other in metaphysical subtleties, both had the good sense utterly to discard them when treating of the practical business of men.

They were distinguished for possessing a very large share of general knowledge, accurate views of life, for social and conversational powers instructive in no common degree—and in the instance of Johnson never excelled. They understood the heart of man and his springs of action perfectly, from their constant intercourse with every class of society. Conscientious and moral in private life, both were zealous in guarding from danger the established religion of their country ; and in the case of Burke, with the utmost liberality to every class of Dissenters. Johnson's censures and aversions, even on trifling occasions, were sometimes marked by rudeness and ferocity; Burke, with more amenity of manners, and regard to the forms of society, rarely permitted his natural ardour of feeling to hurry him into coarseness in private life, and on public occasions only where great interests were at stake and where delicacy was neither necessary nor deserved.

Viewed in every light, both were men of vast powers of mind, such as are rarely seen, from whom no species of learning was hidden, and to whom scarcely any natural gift had been denied; who had grasped at all knowledge with avaricious eagerness, and had proved themselves not less able to acquire than qualified to use this intellectual wealth. None were more liberal in communicating it to others, without that affectation of superiority, in Burke at least, which renders the acquisitions of pedants oppressive, and their intercourse repulsive. Whether learning, life, manners, politics, books, or men, was the subject—whether wisdom was to be taught at once by precept and example, or recreation promoted by amusing and instructive conversation—they were all to be enjoyed in the evening societies of these celebrated friends. As a curious physical coincidence it may be remarked that both were near-sighted.

A dissolution of Parliament occurring in autumn, and a disagreement with Lord Verney rendering his return for Wendover unlikely, the Marquis of Rockingham offered Mr. Burke his interest in Malton, whither he proceeded and was elected.

While expressing his acknowledgments for this favour and on the point of sitting down to dinner, a deputation from the merchants of Bristol, who had travelled rapidly to London, and from London to Yorkshire, in search of him, arrived to propose his becoming a candidate for their city, or rather to accede to his nomination, which had been already made by the leading men there. This, to one who had shown less regard to popularity than prudence demanded, was an unexpected honour. The tender, however, was too handsome to be refused; it was an offering solely to his public merits and commercial knowledge, and the favour was enhanced by the promise of being returned free of expense, an essential consideration to a man of his confined fortune.

Obtaining the ready assent of his Malton friends to this change of destination, he set off at six o'clock in the evening of Tuesday, and travelling night and day, arrived about half past two on Thursday, the 13th of October, and the sixth day of the poll, a distance then of about 350 miles. He drove instantly to the house of the Mayor, but not finding him at home, proceeded to the Guildhall, where ascending the hustings and saluting the electors, sheriffs, and the other candidates, he reposed for a few minutes, being utterly exhausted by fatigue and want of sleep, and then addressed the citizens in a speech which met with great and general approbation.

After a contest protracted to the last moment, he was returned on the third of November. In a powerful address of thanks, delivered on the occasion, he exhibited what many thought too rigid a degree of independence on being pressed as to whether he meant to vote in Parliament according to his own opinion, or to the wishes of his constituents. The question at such a moment was vexatious enough, for a negative might imply on his part something like ingratitude ; but above all evasion or temporising, he respectfully, though firmly, claimed the privilege of following the dictates of his own conscience. His reasons, among the more reflecting class of politicians, have set the question for ever at rest ; no one has thought it necessary to add to them, or prudent to answer them ; though he complained at the moment of want of time and preparation for the discussion.

" Certainly, gentlemen, it ought to be the happiness and glory of a representative, to live in the strictest union, the closest correspondence, and the most unreserved communication with his constituents. Their wishes ought to have great weight with him ; their opinion high respect ; their business unremitted attention. It is his duty to sacrifice his repose, his pleasures, his satisfactions to theirs ; and above all, ever, and in all cases, to prefer their interest to his own. But his unbiassed opinion, his mature judgment, his enlightened conscience, he ought not to sacrifice to you, to any man, or to any set of men living. These he does not derive from your pleasure ; no, nor from the law and the constitution. They are a trust from Providence, for the abuse of which he is deeply answerable. Your representative owes you not his industry only, but his judgment ; and he betrays instead of serving you, if he sacrifices it to your opinion.

" My worthy colleague says, his will ought to be subservient to yours. If that be all, the thing is innocent.

If government were a matter of will upon any side, yours without question ought to be superior. But government and legislation are matters of reason and judgment, and not of inclination; and what sort of reason is that in which the determination precedes the discussion; in which one set of men deliberate and another decide; and where those who form the conclusion are perhaps three hundred miles distant from those who hear the arguments?

"To deliver an opinion is the right of all men; that of constituents is a weighty and respectable opinion, which a representative ought always to rejoice to hear; and which he ought always most seriously to consider. But *authoritative* instructions; *mandates* issued which the member is bound blindly and implicitly to obey, to vote, and to argue for, though contrary to the clearest conviction of his judgment and conscience; these are things utterly unknown to the laws of this land, and which arise from a fundamental mistake of the whole order and tenour of our constitution.

"Parliament is not a *congress* of ambassadors from different and hostile states; whose interests each must maintain as an agent and advocate against other agents and advocates; but Parliament is a *deliberative* assembly of *one* nation with *one* interest, that of the whole; where not local purposes, not local prejudices, ought to guide, but the general good, resulting from the general reason of the whole. You choose a member indeed; but when you have chosen him, he is not member of Bristol, but he is a member of Parliament. If the local constituent should have an interest, or should form an hasty opinion, evidently opposite to the real good of the rest of the community, the member for that place ought to be as far as any other from any endeavour to give it effect."

On another occasion (1780,) he told them—"I did not obey your instructions: No. I conformed to the instructions of truth and nature, and maintained your interest, against your opinions, with a constancy that became me. A representative worthy of you ought to be a person of stability. I am to look indeed to your opinions; but to such opinions as you and I *must* look to five years hence. I was not to look at the flash of the day. I knew that you chose me, in my place, along with others, to be a pillar of the state, and not a weathercock on the top of the edifice, exalted for my levity and versatility, and of no use but to indicate the shiftings of every popular gale."

These speeches being circulated through the country, an unusual thing with election speeches of that day, met with general applause.

A ludicrous anecdote is recorded of his brother candidate, Mr. Cruger, a merchant chiefly concerned in the American trade, who, at the conclusion of one of Mr. Burke's eloquent harangues, finding nothing to add, or perhaps as he thought to add with effect, exclaimed earnestly in the language of the counting-house, "I say ditto to Mr. Burke—I say ditto to Mr. Burke." With such an example before him, however, he must have improved, for in the succeeding session he spoke on American business several times with sufficient spirit.

CHAPTER VI.

Parliamentary Business.—Anecdotes of Drs. Franklin, Priestley, and Mr. Hartley.—Epitaph on Mr. Dowdeswell.—Letters to the Sheriffs and two Gentlemen of Bristol.—To Lord Charlemont, Barry, Mr. Francis, Dr. Robertson.—Statue proposed in Dublin.—Admiral Keppel.

It was the common lot of Mr. Burke, during much of his political life, to see fulfilled in the recess the predictions he had made during the preceding session. So was it with the scheme for shutting up the port of Boston, which more than realised his worst anticipations, by giving birth to that concentration of the most turbulent spirits of the colonies into a congress, where almost at their first meeting, and wholly unknown to their constituents, was laid the plan of total separation from the mother-country. You cursed liar —

A variety of petitions from the merchants and manufacturers, deprecating hostilities, flowed into the House of Commons, which were strenuously though ineffectually seconded by the Member for Bristol; being referred, not to a political committee, as he wished, but to a commercial one which was wittily called by him, and afterwards generally known, as the Committee of Oblivion. For his exertions on these occasions, a handsome letter of thanks was forwarded to him, signed by fifteen of the principal merchants of Birmingham.

Two more important, though indirect, tributes to his public wisdom appeared soon afterwards in the proceedings of the House of Lords: one in the declaratory act of 1766, said to be chiefly his, and censured then by

Lord Chatham, was now adopted by his Lordship as the groundwork of a plan which he brought forward to conciliate America. The other respected the taxation of that country which Mr. Burke had so long ineffectually reprobated, when, on an incidental allusion to that measure, Lords North, Mansfield, Camden, the Duke of Grafton, and others, all advisers of the Crown at the time it was adopted, now, to the surprise of the nation, utterly and angrily disclaimed having taken any part in advising it. The subsequent evidence of Mr. Penn, at the bar of the House of Lords, also seemed to imply, that America would have been quiet had things remained on the footing left by the Rockingham Administration.

Undeterred by the failure of Lord Chatham, Mr. Burke introduced, on the 22d March, 1775, his thirteen celebrated propositions for conciliating America; of the moral and physical character of which he had gained so perfect an acquaintance, that the sketch he then drew both of country and people, though fifty years have elapsed, is as fresh and accurate as any of the present day. It had been, as we have seen, an early subject for his pen; his opinions had been formed respecting it, he expressly tells us, before he entered Parliament: it had been a constant subject of deliberation while he was there; and its importance induced him, favoured by his connexion with the country as colonial agent, to consult every source of information, written and oral, in order to become master of the points in dispute, and guided by circumstances, to point out the wisest policy for England to pursue. The case was different with the Ministry, or rather the succession of Ministries, of the day, who, flitting into and out of the Cabinet like the transient and shadowy figures of a magic lantern, had little time for maturing a plan, and scarcely for continuity of thought on the subject.

His views at this time may be stated in a few words, as by some who even profess to write history, they are misrepresented or misunderstood.

America was imperceptibly become a great country, without aiming at, or scarcely seeming to know it; formed for strength as some men are born to honours, by a decree beyond their own control; that it was unwise to irritate her to exertion of this strength when her natural inclination was for peace and trade: that she might be influenced by mildness and persuasion, but would probably resist command.

He contended for the general supremacy of Parliament and the imperial rights of the Crown as undoubted, though these should be exercised with great reserve over, not a colony, but a nation, situated at a great distance, and difficult, if at all possible to coerce: that in compliance with the unanimous feeling of the people, all the internal details, especially that of taxation, should remain as hitherto, with their provincial assemblies: that a parliamentary revenue, such as aimed at, was next to impossible; that England had never enjoyed, and never would enjoy, a direct productive revenue from any colony, but at all events to trust for it rather to voluntary grants, as in Ireland, than to authoritative requisitions: that all harsh acts be repealed: that the colonies be placed on the same footing toward the mother-country as in 1766; that a feeling of friendly concession alone could govern a people free in spirit and in fact, spread over a vast extent of country, and increasing at an unusual rate in numbers: that peace should be sought in the spirit of peace, not in severe parliamentary enactments, and quoted as examples of the success of lenient measures, the instances of Ireland, Wales, Chester, and Durham: that the right of taxation being relinquished, all moderate men would be conciliated: but if more than all these should be required, then it would be time for us to turn round with a decided negative.

The speech by which the propositions were recommended excited general admiration, and in power did not fall short of that of the preceding year. Mr. Fox, nearly 20 years afterwards, applying its views to Parliamentary Reform, said, "Let gentlemen read this speech by day and meditate upon it by night; let them peruse it again and again, study it, imprint it on their minds, impress it on their hearts—they would there learn that representation was the sovereign remedy for every evil."

Lord Erskine also, in a recent speech at Edinburgh, touching on the same theme, observed, "It could only proceed from this cause (alleged corruption of Parliament,) that the immortal orations of Burke against the American war did not produce as general conviction as they did unmingled admiration." This is certainly not correct; at least Mr. Burke himself, out of the heat of debate, assigned no such reason; he candidly confessed, that the country gentlemen wanted a partner in bearing the burden of taxation: the King wished to see obedient subjects rather than allies; the body of the nation, as jealous of undisputed sovereignty as either, fully seconded their views; and the wisdom of the House of Commons alone put an end to the contest.*

---

* The following, written on a sheet of foolscap, are believed to be either the original notes from which the speech was spoken, or drawn up by himself immediately afterwards, for the information of a friend, to be published on the spur of the moment, at

Toward the close of the session, after three months almost daily discussion of American affairs, he presented a remonstrance from New York, hitherto a quiet and

Bristol; the hand is larger than his usual writing, but it is evidently written in a great hurry, sometimes using the first, sometimes the third person.

ANALYSIS OF MR. BURKE'S SPEECH

ON OFFERING HIS RESOLUTIONS.

"Proëm.

"Apologizing for taking up this measure, stating his own description and situation with great humility, but when he stated in general that (what?) he should propose was not his, but the reasoning and opinions of the Legislature already expressed by our ancestors in old times, were such and such as time had matured and experience confirmed, he had no apology to make, except for any disadvantage these sentiments might receive from the manner of delivering them, &c. &c. &c.

"He then mentioned the unhappy state of our quarrels with our colonies, which could end only in the destruction of our constitution, and the ruin of the British Empire. That peace only could ensure the one, and restore the stability of the other; not an insiduous delusive peace that has slavery in its train, but peace founded on the establishment of the rights of mankind, and on civil liberty, as they are the basis of our empire.

"Not peace by war—

"nor by negotiation.

"Not a peace to be bought by taxes, and bid for at an auction:

"But by conciliation, and concession of the superior—conciliation having gone forth and entered into the heart of every Briton. The Minister has assumed the form of that angel of light, and breathes the spirit of conciliation.—Would to God it was the real spirit of it in good truth.—He hath been driven to the necessity of making concession, but hath been forced by some secret force or fatality, to load and clog his measnres with principles and conditions, such as must render it impossible for loyal colony. which met with the same reception from the Minister, as the other innumerable petitions and agents did from Lords, Commons, and Privy Council;

the Americans to accept it, and which must therefore in the end prove a plan to render them still more obnoxious to Parliament and Government here.

" Leaving behind me and erasing from my mind every idea of Ministers and such persons, I will look only to the spirit and doctrines of your laws, and will seek no peace but where they teach us to look for it, and to follow it.

" Let us not seek peace by force, but by conciliation.

" If *conciliation* be used ineffectually there will still (be) room enough left for *force*; but if *force* be first tried, and that shall prove to be used ineffectually, there will be no room for *conciliation.*

" The magnitude of the object should teach (us) to look to conciliation—and to know that force will not do.

" View—1. The wealth of the colonies.
2. The number of the people.
3. The principles which animate their spirit.
Principles of liberty.
Principles of religion.

" View their character and temper—

Their learning }
and their habits, } as derived from the nature of their popular government—

" Their turn for politics, and their knowledge of such, as taught from their first entrance into life.

" Consider next their vast distance—

" Consider how even despotic governments are obliged to use management and address in the government of their distant provinces.

" If the acts of the opposition in the colonies cannot be prosecuted criminally—

" There is no way to settle it by compromise.

" On this subject of compromise I say nothing as to sovereignty.

" I omit the question as to the right of taxation, and will only few of them were received, and none deigned to be answered.

In the mean time, the first blood was drawn at Lexington and Concord, followed by the fight of Bunker's Hill, the raising of regular armies, the appointment of General Washington as Commander-in-chief, and other consequent measures, which left the chance of accommodation by any means a matter of doubt.

speak to practise and fact as found in the precedents of your own conduct.

" The practice of Parliament
as to Ireland,
Wales,
Chester,
Durham—

" Following these precedents I would propose an American Representation—but the sea and distance are in my way.—As I cannot give the best, I will offer the next best—and that is—that which is already established—

" Their own assemblies—

" They are competent to all the purposes of taxation.

" To lay the ground for that solid basis whereon I would again re-establish peace, and replace the empire and its government.—

" Offers six resolutions of facts.

——————
——————
——————
——————
——————
——————

" Corollaries.

1. That it may be proper to repeal the Tea Act.
2. The Boston Port Bill.
3. The Massachusetts Government Bill.
4. The Military Bill.

The original, in a soiled and tattered condition communicated and purchased as a genuine document, is in possession of Sir P. Phillips.

The rejection of all petitions, no doubt, tended much to the alienation of the public feeling in America; increased, perhaps, by the severity shown to so popular a man as Dr. Franklin, before the Privy Council, the preceding year, on the Massachusetts petition against the governor and deputy-governor of the province. Alluding to this affair, Mr. Burke, who was present, thus writes to the famous General Lee, February 1st, 1774: "Wedderburne uttered a furious philippic against poor Dr. Franklin. It required all his philosophy, natural and acquired, to support him against it."

On that occasion, Dr. Priestley, with whom he was acquainted, relates an anecdote to the following effect:—"Going along Parliament-street, on the morning of the 29th of January, 1774, I met Mr. Burke and Dr. Douglas, Bishop of Salisbury, when the former introduced us to each other, as men of letters, and inquired whither I was going. I replied, I could say whither I *wished* to go; and on explaining that it was to the Privy Council, he desired me to accompany him. The ante-room proved to be so full of persons, on the same errand as ourselves, that I despaired even of getting near the door. 'Keep fast hold of me,' said Mr. Burke, locking my arm within his, and forcing his way, after much difficulty, to the door. 'You are an excellent leader, Mr. Burke.' 'I wish others thought so too,' replied he. We got in among the first, Mr. Burke taking his stand behind the chair next to the President, and I next to him."

Dr. Franklin, whom he had known for about 15 years, gave him, for so wary a politician, an unusual proof of esteem and confidence, by calling upon him in April of this year (1775,) the day previous to his finally quitting London, and opening his mind without seeming reserve. He looked to the approaching contest, he said, with the most painful feelings; nothing could give him more sorrow than that separation between the mother-country and colonies, which now seemed inevitable, from the obstinate and unaccommodating temper of England; adding that America had enjoyed many happy days under her rule, previous to this unhappy dispute, and might possibly never see such again.

Among ourselves, dissensions ran high; the old distinctions of Whig and Tory were revived with all their original acrimony, and Mr. Burke, as the oracle of the former, came in for a large share of abuse;—from Dean Tucker, who represented him as the most artful reasoner living, one who could amuse with tropes, and figures, and fine words, without allowing his design to be seen, till he had entrapped the hearer or reader irrecoverably in the meshes of his argument;—from many others, who, admitting his extraordinary powers, affected to consider them degraded by his becoming so determined a party man.

Some, even of his friends, appeared to join in the latter opinion; as if it were possible for any leading English statesman to be otherwise than a party man. He must of necessity, on first entering into public life, either form a party of his own, or attach himself to one of the two great divisions in the state; and though the choice rests with himself, it is oftener determined by the politics of his friends, or family connexions, especially among young men of rank. Should he profess perfect independence on all points, he will find little, or very hollow support in an assembly, where above all others some certain support is necessary; for without it he cannot even calculate on the humble merit of being merely useful, and certainly cannot become great.

With a party he rises into consequence; he has the advantage of profitting by older heads, and equal, if not superior minds to his own; and to use the language of Burke, on another occasion, "he who profits by an equal understanding, doubles the power of his own." No man jumps into Parliament an able statesman, no more than he can start at the bar, with his first brief, an accomplished lawyer, or enter the field, with his ensign's commission, a finished soldier. He must first learn to submit and to serve, and in time may hope to command. It is useless, therefore, to complain of a politician being a party man; we may as well complain that the independence of the limbs is sacrificed by being affixed to the body, without remembering that it is union alone which makes either useful.

Mr. Burke visited France again in the summer, returning not more favourably impressed than before, with the character of her literati and philosophers. His father-in-law, Dr. Nugent, died in Suffolk-street, in November; a worthy and intelligent man, whom Dr. Johnson not only loved, but used to profess himself proud of the honour of standing high in his esteem; he was author of a new theory of Hydrophobia, and is often mistaken for another Dr. Nugent, a travelling tutor, who published his travels, a translation of Benvenuto Cellini, and other works. In December, he lost another friend and warm admirer in Admiral Sir Charles Saunders, pronouncing on the same evening, an animated apostrophe to his memory in the House of Commons.

The coercive spirit manifested in the address at the opening of the session, brought him forward in a forcible appeal to the House to pause in measures of force; supplicating Ministry to assume some other tone than that of violence; not to let England come to the discussion, like the irritated porcupine with its quills, armed all over with angry acts of Parliament.

Several petitions from the clothiers of Wiltshire gave him the opportunity of proposing, on the 16th of November, 1775, a new conciliatory scheme, grounded on the model of the Statute of Edward I. *de tallagio non concedendo.*

Three plans, he said, were afloat for quieting America; first, simple war, in order to a perfect conquest; secondly, a mixture of war and treaty; thirdly, the best, and in his opinion only practicable mode, peace founded on concession. Among other things he suggested the renunciation of taxation, the repeal of all obnoxious laws since 1766, a general amnesty, and recognition of the Congress, in order to a final adjustment of grievances; a change in all these points, he would not conceal, necessarily involved a change in the Ministers who had brought the country into the dilemma.

Of this speech, which occupied three hours and twenty minutes in the delivery, and was said by many who heard it to possess singular vigour and originality, embracing a vast compass of matter, British and American, only a poor abstract remains; it brought forward all the talents of the House, in a spirit of emulative excellence, to the discussion; and the division was the strongest Opposition had yet mustered on the American question, the numbers against the previous question being 105 to 210.

Four days afterwards, the bill to prohibit all intercourse with America, known by the name of the Starvation Plan, received his unqualified reprobation. Petitions from the West-India and Nova-Scotia merchants, stating their utter ruin to be the consequence of it, were so cavalierly treated, that he moved an ironical resolution, in substance that the House knowing all things relative to America, required no further information. On some large votes for the army extraordinaries, he remarked, that fasting might as well be recommendrd to a body of aldermen at a city-feast, as economy to a committee of supply. Mr. Wilke's motion for Reform he opposed; a humane measure of his own, for saving from depredation seamen and vessels wrecked, failed; as did another conciliatory scheme for America, which he supported, proposed by Mr. David Hartley.

This gentleman, a representative for Hull, a very honest man, a sound Whig, an indefatigable politician, was a long-winded and heavy orator; so dull, indeed, that the period of his rising often became a signal to desert the benches. Having some time after this thinned a full house down to a few dozens, he unexpectedly called for the Riot Act to be read, to support or explain something in the march of his argument. Mr. Burke, who sat near him, and had anxiously waited to speak to the question, could contain himself no longer, but jumping up, gave vent to his impatience by an irresistibly comic remonstrance, that drew peals of laughter from all present, and which Lord North afterward used to repeat, as one of the happiest instances of wit he ever heard.—" The Riot Act! my dear friend, the Riot Act! to what purpose? don't you see that the mob is completely dispersed?"

That conciliary measures were not altogether hopeless, notwithstanding the unceasing acts of Congress to inflame the mind of that country, may be inferred from the difficulty, one of the most curious facts in modern history, with which the declaration of Independence, in July of this year, was carried in that assembly itself. Six states voted for, six against that measure; and the delegates of Pennsylvania were equally divided, when at length a

The very Daemon of Mendacity—
this same Jim Prior ✳ /

member, who had hitherto strenuously opposed it, suddenly changed sides, and decided the question. This hesitation among a body to avow in form what they were in fact—which had raised armies, fought battles, levied imposts, and resisted the mother country by vote, injunction, proclamation, and every other possible mode, is a proof that the passions of moderate men, excited by the arts of the more designing, shrunk from the ultimate consequences of their own violence.) It is an equal proof that the conduct of the English Ministry was utterly deficient in wisdom, moderation, and address; for otherwise scales so nicely poised must have turned in favour of their country.

Some letters in the newspapers this summer, under the signature of Valens, have been attributed to Mr. Burke, though they were really written by William Bourke, who, though he spoke occasionally between 1768 and 1774, found himself more at home in wielding his pen than his tongue.

Edmund seemed rather to seek relief from all political wrangling except what the House of Commons required, in the literary society of which he was always so fond. Mr. Arthur Young, going on his well-known tour through Ireland, received from him the following letter of introduction to Lord Charlemont, remarkable for its elegance of expression, and for some of the sentiments on matters connected with the war.

"Westminster, June 4th, 1776.

"My dear Lord,

"Permit me to make Mr. Young acquainted with you. To his works and his reputation you can be no stranger. I may add, that in conversing with this gentleman, you will find that he is very far from having exhausted his stock of useful and pleasing ideas in the nu-

+ a damned fool

merous publications with which he has favoured the world. He goes into our country to learn, if any thing valuable can be learned, concerning the state of agriculture, and to communicate his knowledge to such gentlemen as wish to improve their estates by such methods of enlightened culture, as none but people of good fortune can employ, especially in the beginning. But examples may be given that hereafter will be useful, when you can prevail on yourselves to let the body of your people into an interest in the prosperity of their country. Your Lordship will think it odd, that I can conclude a letter to you without saying a word on the state of public affairs. But what can I say that will be pleasing to a mind formed like yours? Ireland has missed the most glorious opportunity ever indulged by Heaven to a subordinate state—that of being the safe and certain mediator in the quarrels of a great empire. She has chosen, instead of being the arbiter of peace, to be a feeble party in the war waged against the principle of her own liberties. But I beg pardon for censuring, or seeming to censure, what I perhaps so little comprehend. It certainly is much above me. Here we are, as we are. We have our little dejections for disappointments, our little triumphs for advantages, our little palliatives for disgraces, in a contest that no good fortune can make less than ruinous. I return to Mr. Young, whom I am sure you will receive with the hospitality which you always show to men of merit. Mrs. Burke joins me in our best compliments to Lady Charlemont. Your Lordship, I trust, believes that I have the most affectionate concern in whatever relates to your happiness, and that I have the honour to be ever, my dear Lord,

Your most faithful and
Obliged humble servant,
EDMUND BURKE."

At a literary dinner party at Sir Joshua Reynolds's about this time, Johnson's epitaph on Goldsmith became the subject of conversation; and it being agreed that an English was more approbriate than the Latin one, as well as more consonant to the wish of the deceased, Mr. Burke drew up off-hand the round-robin, so much noticed by Boswell; and in the delicate terms in which it was couched, indicated his reverence for the great moralist, who in return sometimes showed more delicacy to *his* feelings than he did to those of any other person—"I would not (said he) talk to 'Mund against the Rockingham party."

He would not, however, alter the epitaph. Mr. Burke conceived the vernacular language of a country to be the most fitting for mortuary inscriptions, as though possibly not so durable as the Latin, yet sufficiently so to be intelligible as long as it was likely to be preserved, with the advantage of being universally understood; the Greeks used no Latin, and the Latins no Greek inscriptions. His own practice accorded with this opinion; that on Lord Rockingham, and the character of Sir Joshua Reynolds, are admirable; it is also said he wrote one for Lord Chatham. The following, written about this time, upon an intimate political friend, is in Bushley Church, Worcestershire; few know it to be his, never having been published in any work relating to him; and though not unworthy of his pen, it is more deficient in that force and condensation which distinguish the others alluded to:

To the Memory of
WILLIAM DOWDESWELL,
Representative in Parliament for the County
of Worcester,
Chancellor of the Exchequer in the years
1765 and 1766, and a Member of the
King's Privy Council;

A Senator for twenty years;
A Minister for one;
A virtuous citizen for his whole life;
A man of unshaken constancy, inflexible integrity,
unremitted industry.
His mind was generous, open, sincere.
His manners plain, simple, and noble;
Rejecting all sorts of duplicity and disguise
as useless to his designs, and odious
to his nature.
His understanding
was comprehensive, steady, vigorous,
made for the practical business of the State.
In debate he was clear, natural, and convincing.
His knowledge in all things which concerned his duty, profound.
He understood beyond any man of his time
the revenues of his country;
which he preferred to every thing—
except its liberties.
He was a perfect master of the law of Parliament,
And attached to its privileges until they
were set up against the rights of the
people.
All the proceedings
which have weakened government, endangered
freedom, and distracted the
British Empire, were by him
strenuously opposed;
And his last efforts,
under which his health sunk,
were to preserve his country from a civil
war,
which, being unable to prevent, he had
not the misfortune to see.
He was not more respectable on the public
scene
than amiable in private life.
Immersed in the greatest affairs,
he never lost the ancient, native, genuine
English character of a Country Gentleman.
Disdaining and neglecting no office in life,
he was an ancient municipal Magistrate,
With great care and clear judgment
administering justice, maintaining the

police, relieving the distresses, and
regulating the manners, of the
people in his neighbour-
hood.
An husband and father
the kindest, gentlest, most indulgent.
He was every thing in his family except
what he gave up to his country.

His widow, who labours with life in order to form the minds of his eleven children to the resemblance of their father, erects this monument.

The tenor of the Address (1776-77,) and a motion respecting a proclamation of General Howe at New York, drew from Mr. Burke, in an animated address, some intemperate remarks; for which the great interests at stake, and the decided conviction of our whole system of policy being wrong, forms the best apology.

Towards Christmas, a resolution was taken by the Rockingham party to secede from Parliament on all questions connected with America, utter silence being in their opinion the next best step to disregarded admonition. An Address to his Majesty, explanatory of their views and reasons, to be presented in form by the leading members of both Houses, and another of similar tenor to the colonies, were drawn up by Mr. Burke, and appear in his Works; the former a bold, and dignified, and elaborate paper; the latter perhaps not quite so good.

It is pretty certain the design did not originate with him; but when applied to for his sentiments, he, in a letter to the Marquis of Rockingham, dated January 6th, 1777, seems to approve of it fully. Yet at the same time the objections are so fully and ably stated, with so clear a foresight of all the probable consequences, remote and immediate, and the little hope of its effectual accomplishment, from the clashing interests and feelings of the minority, that the reader is impelled to a directly opposite conclusion to that of the writer. So thought the Marquis. For after the receipt of this letter, the interview with the King, the delivery of the memorial, and the attempt at general secession such as at first contemplated, were abandoned.

That such a decisive measure never can be proper under any circumstances, is perhaps saying too much. That it should be often resorted to, or in any case but formidable and pressing necessity, and the most obvious folly on the part of the majority, can only indicate more of anger than of wisdom. The crisis was certainly one of the most momentous ever experienced by the country; yet to secede under such circumstances, was not to meet, but to fly from the danger; and in the then temper of the nation, would have only drawn disapprobation from one half of the people, and ridicule from the other. Persuasion may in time do much, but silence can make few converts; to desert the field is not the way to subdue the enemy. Frequent failure in opposing what he may think the worst policy, and in accomplishing his own most conscientious designs, are natural conditions in the existence of a Member of Parliament, for which he who does not come prepared has not adequately considered the obligations of the office.

A leader of Opposition indeed may imagine that in debating, he is only playing the game of the Minister, by throwing out hints from which the latter so far profits as to prolong his power. It is also extremely discouraging to be constantly out voted, when possibly not out-argued; to spend time and breath, "to watch, fast, and sweat, night after night," as Mr. Burke himself forcibly expresses it, in the forlorn hope of constant minorities. No person felt this more than himself; yet none has more ably stated the necessity, and even the advantages resulting to the country and to the individual from a well-directed opposition, in a conversation with Sir Joshua Reynolds recorded by Boswell in his Life of Johnson.

His position at this time with those who supported the war was somewhat peculiar, though to a public man not unexpected. He had been long bitterly reviled as the factious though eloquent advocate of rebellious America; and he was now, for such is political hostility, almost equally abused for preserving on the same subject what was termed a factious silence. And occasionally Lord Rockingham was as much sneered at for being directed by an Irish Secretary, as the King had recently been abused for being under the influence of a Scotch favourite.

To explain more at large to his constituents his reasons for seceding, and general views on American matters, he drew up and published in April, 1777, the famous "Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol," one of his best pamphlets, containing some fine and just thoughts on our policy; condemning, by allusion, the speculations of Dr. Price, which went to destroy all authority, as well as of those who fell into the other extreme of enforcing it beyond due discretion; and couched in a warmer strain than he had hitherto employed against the authors of the war. The following solemn warning is only one among many instances of the prophetic spirit he displayed in this as in most other great questions:

"I think I know America. If I do not, my ignorance is incurable, for I have spared no pains to understand it; and I do most solemnly assure those of my constituents who put any sort of confidence in my industry and integrity, that every thing that has been done there has arisen from a total misconception of the object; that our means of originally holding America, that our means of reconciling with it after a quarrel, of recovering it after separation, of keeping it after victory, did depend, and must depend, in their several stages and periods, upon a total renunciation of that unconditional submission which has taken such possession of the minds of violent men."

A reply to this came from the eccentric Earl of Abingdon, also a member of Opposition, who, educated at Geneva, had caught the spirit of the democratical principles of that state with more zeal than discretion, and who is said to have made a present to Congress of an estate which he possessed in America. In the House of Lords he had little weight; in the press he made a still worse figure against such an opponent; the latter did not deign to reply,—a mark of contempt which nettled his Lordship not a little,—though an anonymous writer assailed him with considerable powers of ridicule.

In the midst of this political bustle, a claim was also made upon his opinion in a matter of taste. That extraordinary character Barry, who possessed neither time that he could justly spare, nor wealth to support him in its progress (having at its commencement something less than a guinea in the world that he could call his own,) had undertaken to decorate the great room of the Society of Arts with paintings gratuitously, and now solicited Mr. Burke to communicate his ideas on the most appropriate designs. From the following answer to this application, there is perhaps little doubt that whatever merit there be in those great works, some portion of it is due to him; the remark of Dr. Johnson when he saw them in 1783, being, " Whatever the hand may have done, the mind has done its part. There is a grasp of mind there which you will find no where else."

"TO JAMES BARRY, ESQ.

"Mr. Burke presents his best compliments to Mr. Barry, and begs pardon for making use of another's hand in giving him his thanks for the great honour he has done him by inscribing to him the print of Job; as well as for the prints sent to his son Richard of the other five designs: but being obliged to go out in great haste, after having been engaged in business for the whole morning, he is under the necessity of dictating this note while he is dressing.

"Mr. Barry does him too much honour in thinking him capable of giving him any hints towards the conduct of the great design in which Mr. Burke is very happy to find he is engaged. Mr. Burke is, without any affectation, thoroughly convinced that he has no skill whatsoever in the art of painting; but he will very cheerfully turn his thoughts towards recollecting passages of modern or middle history, relative to the cultivation of the arts and manufactures; and Mr. Barry will judge better than he can, whether they are such as will answer his purpose.

"Mr. Burke will have the pleasure of waiting on Mr. Barry, to communicate to him what occurs to him on the subject, at his first leisure moment."

The debts of the Civil List, and an increase of its annual amount, brought Mr. Burke forward again, severely censuring the wastefulness of Ministry; and his interposition, in a happy mixture of argument and irony, saved Alderman Sawbridge, whose language was indecorous and disrespectful towards his Majesty, from public reproof.

Another opponent was soon afterwards silenced by his wit. During one of the debates on Lord Pigot's recall from Madras, he had twice given way to other speakers, when observing the chairman of the India Company proceeding to read a variety of well-known public papers instead of adducing any new arguments, he interrupted him by observing, "That if it were the object of the honourable member to tire and thin the House by reading all the heavy folios on the table, he supposed in courtesy he must submit; but to prepare for the task, he begged leave to send for his night-cap;" which producing general laughter, was followed by a shout of—go on! go on! The hint of the night-cap, however, has been so far improved upon by a mob-orator of the present day, as to have been actually produced by way of threat, in order to gain attention from indignant and impatient auditors.

On the discussion of this subject in a masterly way, the treatment of Lord Pigot by the contradictory votes of the India proprietors, he was cheered in an unprecedented manner, exciting, in the language of contemporary writers, "such sudden and extraordinary bursts of approbation as were not warranted by the usual practice of the House," and which in return produced some sharp animadversions from the other side, "that the wit displayed in turning the Company's late resolutions and conduct into ridicule, was as ill-placed and as improperly applied, as the theatrical applause which it produced was irregular and indecent."

It was on this question that he first threw out doubts on the conduct of Mr. Hastings; partly through communications from the Pigot family, which he knew; partly from other friends resident in India, among whom was the late Sir Philip Francis, a man of superior talents, independent mind, and an abhorrence of any thing resembling oppression, little inferior to that of Mr. Burke himself. To this gentleman, with whom he had been early acquainted, he wrote a letter, of which the following is an extract, on the rising of Parliament, strenuously recommending to his good offices his old friend and associate William Bourke, then proceeding to India to better his fortune. This gentleman soon became Agent to the Rajah of Tanjore, and afterwards Deputy Paymaster-General for India, supplying Edmund, it is said, with much and minute information respecting that country.

"Westminster, 9th of June, 1777.

"My dear Sir,

"Our common friend, John Bourke, informs me that you still retain that kindness which you were so good to express towards me before you left London. This wide disconnected empire will frequently disperse those who are dear to one another; but, if this dispersion of their persons does not loosen their regards, it every now and then gives such unexpected opportunities of meeting, as almost compensate the pain of separation, and furnishes means of kind offices, and mutual services, which make even absence and distance the causes of new endearment and continued remembrance.

"These thoughts occur to me too naturally as my only comforts in parting with a friend, whom I have tenderly loved, highly valued, and continually lived with, in an union not to be expressed, quite since our boyish years. Indemnify me, my dear Sir, as well as you can, for such a loss, by contributing to the fortune of my friend. Bring him home with you and at his ease, under the protection of your opulence. You know what his situation has been, and what things he might have surely kept, and infinitely increased, if he had not had those feelings which make a man worthy of fortune. Remember that he asks those favours which nothing but his sense of honour prevented his having it in his power to bestow. This will be a powerful recommendation to a heart like yours. Let Bengal protect a spirit and rectitude which are no longer tolerated in England.

" I do not know, indeed, that he will visit your kingdom ; but, if he should, I trust he will find a friend there whose manner of serving him will not be in the style of those who acquit themselves of a burthen. Mr. Bourke's first views, indeed, are at Madras ; but all India is now closely connected ; and your influence and power are such, that you may serve him materially even there. I will not wrong your friendship by pressing this matter any further, but it is indeed near to my heart.

" I say nothing of your eastern politics. The affairs of America, which are as important, and more distracted, have almost entirely engrossed the attention which I am able to give to any thing. . . . . France gives all the assistance to the colonies which is consistent with the appearance of neutrality. Time is to show whether she will proceed further, or whether America can maintain herself in the present struggle, without a more open declaration, and more decided effort from that power. At present the Ministers seem confident that France is resolved to be quiet. If the Court of Versailles be so pacific, I assure you it is in defiance of the wishes and opinions of that whole nation."

At home, Mr. Burke's son, a promising young man, failed in a trial for academical distinction at Oxford, in a theme admirably adapted to the depth and discrimination of the powers of the father, " The Origin and Use of Printing." To Mr. Fox, who, with Lord John Townshend, spent the summer in Ireland, he wrote a confidential and interesting letter, in October, on the state of parties, giving the most friendly and disinterested advice on the best line of public conduct for him to pursue.

A present from Dr. Robertson, of his History of America, then recently published, drew from Mr. Burke an interesting letter, critical and complimentary, and especially alluding to his own favourite study of human nature, the most useful of all studies.

" I am perfectly sensible of the very flattering distinction I have received in your thinking me worthy of so noble a present as that of your History of America. I have, however, suffered my gratitude to lie under some suspicion, by delaying my acknowledgments of so great a favour. But my delay was only to render my obligation to you more complete, and my thanks, if possible, more merited. The close of the session brought a great deal of troublesome though not important business on me at once. I could not go through your work at one breath at that time, though I have done it since.

" I am now enabled to thank you, not only for the honour you have done me, but for the great satisfaction and the infinite variety and compass of instruction I have received from your incomparable work. Every thing has been done which was so naturally to be expected from the author of the History of Scotland, and of the age of Charles the Fifth. I believe few books have done more than this towards clearing up dark points, correcting errors, and removing prejudices. You have too the rare secret of rekindling an interest on subjects that had so often been treated, and in which any thing that could feed a vital flame appeared to have been consumed. I am sure I read many parts of your history with that fresh concern and anxiety which attend those who are not previously apprised of the event. You have besides thrown quite a new light on the present state of the Spanish provinces, and furnished both materials and hints for a rational theory of what may be expected from them in future.

"The part which I read with the greatest pleasure, is the discussion on the manners and character of the inhabitants of that new world. I have always thought with you, that we possess at this time very great advantage towards the knowledge of human nature. We need no longer go to history to trace it in all stages and periods. History from its comparative youth, is but a poor instructor. When the Egyptians called the Greeks children in antiquities, we may well call them children; and so we may call all those nations which were able to trace the progress of society only within their own limits. But now the great map of mankind is unrolled at once, and there is no state or gradation of barbarism, and no mode of refinement which we have not at the same moment under our view; the very different civility of Europe and of China; the barbarism of Persia and of Abyssinia; the erratic manners of Tartary and Arabia; the savage of North America and of New Zealand. Indeed you have made a noble use of the advantages you have had. You have employed philosophy to judge on manners, and from manners you have drawn new resources for philosophy. I only think that in one or two points you have hardly done justice to the savage character.

"There remains before you a great field. *Periculosæ plenum opus aleæ tractas, et incedis per ignes suppositos cineri doloso.* Whenever these ashes will be spread over the present fire, God knows. I am heartily sorry that we are now supplying you with that kind of dignity and concern which is purchased to history at the expense of mankind. I had rather by far that Dr. Robertson's pen were only employed in delineating the humble scenes of political economy, than the great events of a civil war.

If our statesmen had read the book of human nature instead of the journals of the House of Commons, and history instead of acts of parliament, we should not by the latter have furnished out so ample a page for the former."

Robertson, whom he had known for many years, was with him a favourite writer of history. Not so Gibbon; on whose first volume appearing, the preceding year, he called on Sir Joshua Reynolds a day or two afterwards, and, in the hearing of Mr. Northcote, pronounced the style vicious and affected, savouring too much of literary tinsel and frippery; a sentence which all the best judges have since confirmed.

The next session, 1778, brought back the seceders of Opposition to the performance of their public duties. Those of Mr. Burke, who grasped the labouring oar as his particular province, were this year unusually diversified and fatiguing. His seat at least was not a sinecure; whatever else he spared, he never spared himself; he seemed often to be trying the experiment, what compass of political interests and business it was possible for the human mind to embrace and retain; what degree of labour in expounding them to endure: a few of the leading points, as in all the other sessions, are alone necessary to be alluded to here.

On the 6th of February he introduced a motion for papers relative to the employment of the Indians in the war, by a speech three hours and a half long, which excited not only extraordinary testimonies of admiration, but was considered by all who heard him the very best he had ever delivered. The theme, as connected with the interests of humanity, possessed much interest, and in itself was peculiarly fitted to display some of his most popular qualities as a speaker. Strangers being excluded from the gallery, no tolerable report, or even abstract of it, has ever been published or perhaps preserved. The pathetic episode, however, of Miss Macrae, a young lady betrothed to a British officer, and entrusted to two Indians to convey her to a place of safety, but who, quarrelling by the road about the division of the expected quantity of rum promised as their reward, savagely murdered her at once to end the dispute, was so vividly painted as to excite an emotion of abhorrence against such auxiliaries throughout the country.

Heated by the powers of the speaker, Colonel Barré, in a fit of enthusiasm, offered to nail the speech, if published, on every church door in the kingdom by the side of the proclamation for a general fast. Governor Johnstone thought it fortunate for the two noble lords (North and Germaine) that there were no strangers present, or their enthusiasm and indignation would have excited the people to tear them to pieces on their way home. Sir George Saville said to many of his friends, " he who did not hear that speech, has not witnessed the greatest triumph of eloquence within memory."

[After all, it may be doubted whether this was not a party question. Congress would have engaged these allies if England had not; and Lord Chatham, though venting a torrent of indignation on the same side, in the House of Lords, could not disprove that they were employed under his own administration.]

Eleven days afterwards another tacit tribute to the wisdom of Mr. Burke's advice appeared in a conciliatory plan of Lord North, taken chiefly from that proposed by the former three years before; it was supported by the same arguments, and Mr. Fox congratulated his lordship on at length becoming a proselyte to the doctrines of his honourable friend. The time, however, was gone by in

(a malicious fiend — a rancorous liar]

which it could have effect. His Lordship, though a man of talent and personal integrity, wanted enlargement of mind for the circumstances in which he was placed; as a minister he was too often a long march in the rear of events; his remedial measures came when they were forced, not voluntarily proffered; he could foresee little till it pressed upon him with overpowering necessity.

America now would accept nothing short of independence, and the junction of France, for which the Minister seemed equally unprepared, though often dinned in his ears by the member for Bristol, seemed to render it certain. Under this impression it became a question whether to acknowledge the independence of that country at once, and by that means secure commercial preferences; an alliance offensive and defensive, and other advantages accruing from the kindly feelings produced by this concession and our remaining influence and old connexion, or, by persisting in what appeared unattainable, not only lose them ourselves but throw them into the scale of France, our constant and watchful enemy.

To the former as an unavoidable result, Mr. Burke, after much deliberation, inclined. Lord Chatham as strenuously opposed it; declaring that, the independence of America once acknowledged, the sun of England was set for ever, and, in urging this sentiment in the House of Lords, was seized with that illness which terminated in his death.—Deficient in many respects, he was nevertheless the greatest war Minister this country ever had. But he was no prophet; time, which has belied his prediction, has shown the superior judgment of the leader of the Rockingham party. The latter, on the death of this great man being announced, immediately urged in his place the necessity for the nation showing its sense of his services by a provision for his family, in addition to posthumous honours. He was also one of the pall-bearers at the funeral.

A proposition by Lord Nugent to revise a series of oppressive restrictions on the trade of Ireland naturally claimed the serious consideration and support of Mr. Burke. His great effort was in a speech on the 6th of May, exhibiting a more comprehensive, yet practical view of the commercial condition, intercourse, interests, and capabilities of the kingdoms, contrasting their comparative advantages and defects, than had ever been given there before. The grievance being undeniable, both sides of the House agreed at once to the remedy, when suddenly a number of hostile petitions pouring in from the trading and manufacturing towns, diverted the Minister from his purpose; thus a narrow and selfish system of policy had already driven America into revolt, yet the very same policy again risked the loss of Ireland.

Bristol taking a conspicuous part in the endeavour to repress the industry of the sister island, called upon her representative to support her views. The dilemma could not be otherwise than unpleasant to him. But regarding principle above every consideration of prudence, he manfully avowed, that to comply with this desire, would be to sin against his conscience, against the first, principles of justice, against the general prosperity of the empire, and, however his constituents might think, against the truest interests of trade itself.—

" If, from this conduct," said he, " I shall forfeit their suffrages at an ensuing election, it will stand on record an example to future representatives of the Commons of England, that one man at least had dared to resist the desires of his constituents, when his judgment assured him they were wrong."

To state his reasons more fully for declining compliance with their request, he wrote in April and May, 1778, ‘Two Letters to Gentlemen of Bristol on the Bills relative to the Trade of Ireland.’ These expound, in a few touches some of the chief principles of commerce, such as the advantage of freedom of intercourse between all parts of the same kingdom; of reciprocity of benefits; of the evils of restriction and monopoly; of the advantage to ourselves of all our customers, particularly our fellow-subjects, being rich rather than poor; and that the gain of others is not necessarily our loss, but, on the contrary, an advantage. Political economists consider these truths the mere alphabet of their art, while merchants, if they do not deny them in theory, can rarely be brought to approve many of them in practice. Exclusions and restrictions, the depression of one body of individuals or district of country to exalt another, belong almost as much to their system as the invoice and ledger. His arguments, which were then in a great degree new, produced little effect; the people of Bristol could not be convinced there was equity or policy in giving a free trade to Ireland; his determination, however, continued unchanged, adding—“While I remain under this unalterable and powerful conviction, you will not wonder at the *decided* part I take. It is my custom so to do when I see my way clearly before me; and when I know that I am not misled by any passion, or any personal interest, which, in this case, I am very sure I am not.”

Another offence in the eyes of his constituents was in vigorously supporting Sir George Saville’s Bill for the Relief of the Roman Catholics, then much oppressed by the severity of the laws. It was in fact believed among his friends, like many other bills brought forward by others, to be wholly his own, though not formally avowed, in order to avoid popular odium; its justice was immediately recognized by the almost unanimous votes of both Houses of Parliament.

During the progress of the measure frequent correspondence took place with Mr. Pery, Speaker of the Irish House of Commons, to whom a letter written by Mr. Burke, July 18th, 1778, on the Heads of a Bill for the Relief of the Dissenters and Roman Catholics of Ireland, is extant in his works. Dublin was then enthusiastic in his praise; a design, warmly seconded by the public, was even announced to him by the same gentleman, of erecting his statue in that city. This proved but a spurt of gratitude, soon forgotten, and never since revived; so that this great man, the most illustrious, in many respects, she ever produced, who, had he been born in Scotland, would be almost deified by the people, has not in Ireland procured a stone to his memory: the only tributes of respect, known by the writer, being a picture in the theatre of Trinity College, and a bust in its library. An unfeigned humility made him shrink from the idea of a statue; and his observations on it, above a year afterwards, in a letter to a member of the Irish Legislature, on her domestic affairs, when his popularity there had declined, are marked by his accustomed force and truth.—

"I too have had my holiday of popularity in Ireland. I have even heard of an intention to erect a statue. I believe my intimate friends know how little that idea was encouraged by me; and I was sincerely glad that it never took effect. Such honours belong exclusively to the tomb—the natural and only period of human inconstancy, with regard either to desert or to opinion; for they are the very same hands which erect, that very frequently (and sometimes with reason enough) pluck down the statue. Had such an unmerited and unlooked for compliment been paid to me two years ago, the fragments of the piece might at this hour have the advantage of seeing actual service, while they were moving according to the law of projectiles, to the windows of the Attorney-General, or of my old friend Monk Mason."

Besides these topics of the session, he took an active part in the questions on the state of the Navy, the exclusion of contractors from seats in the House, the raising of men and money without consent of Parliament, the Habeas-corpus suspension as applied to the Americans, and more particularly an able exposition of General Burgoyne's disastrous expedition. In a sharp debate on the ordnance estimates, no reply being given to his questions on their unusual amount, and the Speaker proceeding to put the question, he declared he would not suffer it to be put until some explanation was given, when, after a pause, it appeared that not one of the board knew any thing practically of the subject. Touching on the point of order which had been alluded to, he considered it contemptible, when, instead of forwarding, it stood in opposition to the substance of their duty, and long afterwards boasted that, during all the years he had sate in Parliament, he had never called any member to order.

The indecisive action of Admiral Keppel with the French fleet, during the summer of 1778, and the dissension to which it gave rise with Sir Hugh Palliser, his second in command, became so much a theme for contention after the meeting of Parliament, that, in fact, almost every man in the nation ranged himself on the side of one or other of the parties.

For the admiral, who had been taken from the ranks of Opposition to command the fleet, Mr. Burke had a most warm regard, having first met him at the house of Sir Joshua Reynolds, to whom the admiral had been an early patron; political connexion improved the acquaintance into close and lasting friendship, of which the apostrophe to his memory, in a letter to a noble lord, is a proof, and, at the same time, perhaps, one of the most eloquent tributes to a dead friend in our language. The admiral was not less warm in his admiration, and had declared of Mr. Burke, along with his old commander Sir Charles Saunders and others of the party, ‘ that if the country were to be saved, it could be only by the virtue and abilities of that wonderful man.’ When about to undergo the ordeal of a court-martial, Mr. Burke accompanied him to Portsmouth, received from him there his picture, by Mr. Reynolds, as a species of legacy in case the court-martial should decide against his honour and character, remained with him during much of the trial, and is reported to have assisted in arranging his defence.

His own interests, however, had been attacked by Lord Verney, in a suit in Chancery, calling upon him, in conjunction with his brother Richard and William Bourke as partners with his Lordship, to bear part of the loss sustained by unsuccessful speculations in the funds. This participation he denied by affidavit; nor was the circumstance probable in itself, or some better evidence of it would have been adduced than the Peer could bring forward; they had not, in fact, been friends for some time, and though his brother might possibly have participated in the transaction, it was scarcely fair to call upon him to pay his debts of honour, for there could be no legal claim. As a considerable degree of misrepresentation has prevailed on this point, it may be necessary to state, that as a holder of India stock, he might have profited by it as any other man would do, though even this is doubtful; but there is not the slightest foundation for the report of his gambling in the funds, which was not merely at variance with his habits but his principles.

Another charge urged against him, as if it were not a misfortune rather than a fault, was that of being often in debt. Let it be remembered, however, that the rental of his estate was not estimated at more than 700*l.* per annum, which, with his Irish property, occasional supplies, and the produce of his literary labours, formed nearly the whole of his income, after the cessation of the agency for New York. Moving in the sphere of life in which he did, this must be confessed to be a poor pittance; yet out of this, it may be stated without indelicacy, as he more than once mentioned it himself, he contributed to the support of several poorer relations, and this of course could only be effected by very rigid economy.

He had, in fact, no extravagant propensities to indulge; his domestic arrangements were under the prudent management of his lady: his coach-horses took their turn in the plough; his table, to which men of merit or distinction in every class were always welcome, partook more of neatness and moderation, than parade and profusion. At Beaconsfield he preserved a frank and cheerful hospitality, which those who enjoyed once were glad of the opportunity to enjoy again; while in town, he frequently asked political and literary friends to dine on beef-stakes, or a leg of mutton, and occasionally gave little more than he professed.

Another accusation urged against him at this time was, that he displayed much more of ability than of candour in harassing ministry with the most unmeasured condemnation, but the same may be said of all Oppositions; and, looking to the magnitude of the contest, the incapacity shown in its conduct, and the unfortunate results, it will be difficult to say that his censures were unfair or unjust. Mr. Fox was upon almost all occasions more violent and much more personal, to a degree beyond even parliamentary license; he constantly wore in the House what was considered the American uniform, buff and blue, which Mr. Burke, except when solicited so to do, which was not unfrequently, declined to make his common dress. The most moderate men, in fact, lost their equanimity on this topic; and Messrs. Wilkes, Sawbridge, and others of the same stamp, were sometimes scurrilous, for on no preceding occasion had debates run so high; and even the House of Lords often forgot its characteristic decorum.

This spirit found ample vent in the remainder of the session, 1778 and 1779, in a series of motions by Mr. Fox, following the acquittal of Admiral Keppel, on the state of the Navy; of Greenwich Hospital; the incapacity of Lord Sandwich; and an address to the King to remove him, which were supported by Mr. Burke; who also took part on the question of the threatening manifesto of the Commissioners sent to negociate with America; the conduct of Sir William Howe; the rupture with Spain in June, which he had long predicted; and on a bill for doing away with exemptions from being pressed into the Navy.

Ireland, notwithstanding his renewed endeavours, being still denied participation in the commerce of the empire, came to a variety of resolutions against importing British manufactures; and, with still more effect, formed her memorable volunteer associations, 'nothing resembling which,' said Lord Sheffield, writing a few years afterwards, 'has ever been observed in any country, at least where there was an established government.'

Even Scotland was not quiet. The concessions to the Catholics in the preceding year instigated a mob not only to raze their chapels to the ground, but to destroy their private houses and property. A petition from this body, praying for compensation for their losses, and security against further injury, was presented by Mr. Burke, who found an opportunity on this occasion for exercising his wit, though, perhaps, not in the best taste, to the great amusement of the House; for observing Lord North to be asleep (a frequent failing of that nobleman in public,) at the moment he was attributing the popular excesses to the supineness of those in power, he instantly turned the incident to advantage—"Behold," said he, pointing to the slumbering Minister, "what I have again and again told you, that Government, if not defunct, at least nods; brother Lazarus is not dead, only sleepeth."

CHAPTER VII.

Economical Reform.—Intercedes for mercy towards the Rioters.—Rejection at Bristol.—Opposed to Mr. Fox on the Repeal of the Marriage Act.—Mr. Sheridan.—Change of Ministry.

During the summer of 1779, the dangers of the country had alarmingly increased; no progress was made in subduing America; the expense of the war exceeded all precedent; the enemy's fleet sweeping triumphantly through the Channel, threatened Plymouth and other parts of the coast; and Ireland, in a state of moral, seemed rapidly proceeding to actual, revolt, by riots in Dublin, by the extension of the system and the imposing attitude of the volunteers, by the strong measure of a money-bill for six months only, and by very general resolutions against "the unjust, illiberal, and impolitic selfishness of England."

The speech, from the throne, in November, recommending her hitherto rejected claims to consideration, drew from the Member for Bristol many bitter taunts on the want of means, not of will, in Ministry, to coerce her by fire and sword, as they had attempted with America. These, though stigmatised as inflammatory, were perhaps not undeserved; dire necessity alone had extracted the measure from the Minister, upon whom a vote of censure for neglect, moved by Lord Ossory, gave birth to highly-applauded speeches by Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke; the latter remarking, that that which had at first been requested as a favour, was delayed till angrily demanded as a right; till threats extorted what had been denied to entreaties; till England had lost the moment of granting with dignity, and Ireland of receiving with gratitude.

When, however, Lord North introduced his plan of relief, he gave it his approval, though without that warmth which the zealous spirits of Ireland expected, and they themselves displayed on the occasion, but which he conceived its tardy justice scarcely deserved. Hence arose a misrepresentation there, that he was altogether indifferent to the relief; his popularity therefore sunk at once, both in the land of his birth and in that of his adoption; in Bristol, for conceding any commercial advantage whatever, and in Dublin, for withholding any point, however indifferent or unimportant in itself; a lot to which all statesmen, who act without favour or partiality towards contending interests, are too often exposed.

To remove this impression in Ireland, he wrote "A Letter to Thomas Burgh, Esq." dated Jan. 1, 1780, explanatory of his views and motives, which, though meant to be private, soon found its way, by the zeal of his friends, into the periodical prints of the time, and in some degree set him right with the more intelligent part of his countrymen.

The ill success of the war, and the increased taxation required to support it, occasioning at this moment loud outcries for Parliamentary Reform, and retrenchment of the public expenditure, Mr. Burke dexterously wrested attention from the former, which he had always deemed an unsafe and impracticable measure, to the latter; which he thought in every respect most desirable.

Of all men in the House he was perhaps the best qualified for the attempt, by a share of political courage which shrunk from no duty however invidious, and habits of business which, at all times laborious, were on this occasion exerted beyond all precedent "For my own part," said he, "I have very little to recommend me for this, or for any task, but a kind of earnest and anxious perseverance of mind, which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my constitution." Cautious of experiment, as he professed to be, even to timidity, this feeling formed a pledge, that no crude or showy innovations should be attempted merely because they were new; and his idea of a very cheap government not being necessarily the very best, rendered it certain that nothing really useful should be taken away. He knew too much of human nature, and of the business of the State, to be led astray by visionary schemes of hopeless purity and impossible perfection. The habits of the country, he knew, were any thing but niggardly toward public offices and public servants. While duty, therefore, required that nothing gross should be permitted to remain, a personal as well as public liberality ensured that no injustice to individuals should be inflicted; that economy should not become penury, or reform utter extirpation.

His notice of motion, on the 15th December, opened a brief but lucid exposition of his views, to which Opposition gave much praise for the matter and the manner, scarcely any one else venturing to say a word on such a ticklish subject. A slight incident, on this occasion, again showed his dexterity in debate. While enforcing the necessity for frugality, and recommending to the Minister the old and valuable Roman apothegm *magnum vectigal est parsimonia*, he used a false quantity, rendering the second word *vēctĭgal.* Lord North, in a low tone, corrected the error, when Mr. Burke, with his usual presence of mind, turned the mistake to advantage. "The Noble Lord," said he, "hints that I have erred in the quantity of a principal word in my quotation; I rejoice at it; because it gives me an opportunity of repeating the inestimable adage,"—and with increased energy he thundered forth—"*magnum vect-ī gal est parsimonia.*"

Great as was the idea entertained of his talents, expectation was infinitely surpassed by the production of the plan itself, introduced by the memorable speech of the 11th of February, 1780, which every one conversant with political history has read, and he who has read will not readily forget. No public measure of the century received such general encomium. Few speeches from the Opposition side of the House ever fell with greater effect; and of itself, had he never made any other, would place him in the first rank of practical statesmen, for comprehensiveness of design, minute knowledge of detail, the mingled moderation and justice towards the public and to the persons affected, the wisdom of its general principles, and their application to local objects. As a composition it has been considered the most brilliant combination of powers that ever was, or perhaps can be, devoted to such a topic; and when printed, passed through a great number of editions.

The whole of the scheme was comprised in five bills; embracing the sale of forest lands; the abolition of the inferior royal jurisdictions of Wales, Cornwall, Chester, and Lancaster; of Treasurer, Comptroller, Cofferer, Master, and a variety of inferior officers in the Household; of Treasurer of the Chamber; of the Wardrobe, Jewel, and Robes Offices; of the Boards of Trade, Green-cloth, and of Works; of the office of third Secretary of State; of the Keepers of the Stag, Buck, and Fox Hounds; much of the civil branches of the Ordnance and Mint; of the patent offices of the Exchequer; the regulation of the army, navy, and pension pay offices, and some others; and above all, a new arrangement of the Civil List, by which debt should be avoided in future, and priority of payment ensured to the least powerful claimants, the First Lord of the Treasury being the last on the list.

The bare enumeration is astounding to any man of moderate courage; but to reduce or regulate so many sources of influence, to place the remedy side by side with the grievance, to encounter the odium of annihilating or diminishing the possessor's emoluments, was considered the most arduous undertaking ever attempted by any member out of office, and supposed to affect too many interests even for the authority of those who were in; putting aside the complication and difficulty presented in every stage of its progress.

"It must remain," said Mr. Dunning in a burst of admiration, "as a monument to be handed down to posterity of his uncommon zeal, unrivalled industry, astonishing abilities, and invincible perseverance. He had undertaken a task big with labour and difficulty; a task that embraced a variety of the most important objects, extensive and complicated; yet such were the eminent and unequalled abilities, so extraordinary the talents and ingenuity, and such the fortunate frame of the honourable gentleman's mind, his vast capacity and happy conception, that in his hands, what must have proved a vast heap of ponderous matter, composed of heterogeneous ingredients, discordant in their nature and opposite in principle, so skilfully arranged as to become quite simple as to each respective part, dependant on each other; and the whole at the same time so judiciously combined, as to present nothing to almost any mind tolerably intelligent, to divide, puzzle, or distract it."

" Mr. Burke's Reform bill," says the historian Gibbon, " was framed with skill, introduced with eloquence, and supported by numbers. Never can I forget the delight with which that diffusive and ingenious orator was heard by all sides of the House, and even by those (Gibbon himself was one of them) whose existence he proscribed."

" Only one sentiment," remarks another contemporary who voted against the measure, " pervaded the House and the nation, on the unexampled combination of eloquence, labour, and perseverance which had been displayed by their enlightened author. They covered with astonishment and admiration even those who, from principle or from party, appeared most strenuous in opposing the progress of the bill itself through every stage."

Innumerable testimonies of the same kind might be quoted even from some of the Ministry, who were nevertheless ingenious enough to oppose in detail what they applauded in the gross. A considerable part of March, April, and May, were occupied in debating the different clauses; that for abolishing the office of third Secretary of State was lost on the 8th of the former month by a majority of seven, after one of the hardest fought contests ever remembered.

Five days afterwards, however, by the irresistible effect of the wit of the mover, as much as his eloquence, sentence of death was passed on the poor Board of Trade by a majority of eight; the two thousand three hundred folio volumes of its labours, rather unluckily urged by Mr. Eden in its defence, being ridiculed with such inimitable effect by the mover, as to be, in the opinion of many, the chief cause of condemnation; execution, however, was contrived to be delayed for the present. A week afterwards the sentiments of the House seemed unexpectedly changed by other clauses in the bills being rejected by great majorities.

A proposal by Lord North to give the India Company the three years' notice previous to the dissolution of their charter, produced a speech of great fervour and animation from the Member for Bristol; he supported a bill for suspending the elective franchise of revenue officers, and also the famous resolution of Mr. Dunning, that the increasing influence of the Crown ought to be diminished.

Amid these duties he found time (April 4th) to write a letter on the affairs of Ireland, enforcing his former opinions, to John Merlott, Esq. of Bristol. Eight days afterwards another was addressed to the chairman of the Buckinghamshire meeting for obtaining Parliamentary Reform; a scheme which he considered ineffectual to its intended purpose, and pregnant with danger. The results, he said, of all his reading, all his thinking, all his practical and Parliamentary knowledge, all his communications with the most experienced and able men, were against the change—" Please God," added he emphatically, "I will walk with caution, whenever I am not able clearly to see my way before me."

About this time, a few petitions to repeal the indulgences granted to the Catholics two years before, excited to action the Protestant associations under Lord George Gordon; a moody fanatic, whose talents were contemptible, his language in the House often coarse and reprehensible, sometimes almost treasonable, though disregarded as the ravings of a half-madman. He had moved, without finding a seconder, that the petition presented by Mr. Burke the preceding session, from the Catholic sufferers by the riots in Scotland, "be thrown over the table;" and now, to give further proofs of his zeal, called together, "for the honour of God," the rabble of London. The consequences were the riots; one of the most disgraceful pages in our history, when the powers of the members of government, seemingly sunk in hopeless apathy, waited to be roused by the spirit and good sense of the King, who by taking the responsibility upon himself of ordering the military to act, restored the metropolis to the dominion of order and law.

In the exigency of the moment, when Mr. Fox, with inconsiderate party feelings, refused to strengthen the hands of the government, Mr. Burke, much to his honour, strongly recommended it; advising him to forget all differences in unanimity and defensive associations. As a powerful advocate of the persecuted sect, the fanatical feeling ran strongly against him among some of the leaders; his residence in the broad sanctuary was more than once heard to be threatened, he was reviled as a Jesuit in disguise, nick-named Neddy St. Omer's, and caricatured as a monk stirring the fires of Smithfield, in addition to much more vituperation. Trusting, however, to a considerable share of popularity, or believing that the bulk of the mob, being bent on plunder and riot, cared little for any thing else, he did not hesitate to mix with a party of them, and experienced no personal ill-will.

His own notice of the adventure, written soon after to Mr. Shackleton, is as follows :—

"My wife being safely lodged, I spent part of the next day in the street amidst this wild assembly into whose hands I delivered myself, informing them who I was. Some of them were malignant and fanatical, but I think the far greater part of those whom I saw were rather dissolute and unruly than very ill disposed. I even found friends and well-wishers among the blue-cockades."

Few things do more credit to the active and perhaps sensitive humanity of this eminent man, than his zealous though unostentatious endeavours for the extension of the royal mercy to the chief part of the unhappy rioters who now awaited the awful retribution of the law. With this view he drew up some reflections on the approaching executions, and exerted his influence in pressing letters to the Lord Chancellor, Lord Mansfield, the President of the Council, and the Secretary to the Treasury, to submit his opinions to his Majesty and Lord North.

Public justice, he urged, ought to be satisfied with the smallest possible number of victims; that numerous executions, far from increasing, diminished the solemnity of the sacrifice; anticipating in this respect the general feeling of the present day, that if not absolutely characteristic of a sanguinary disposition, they are certainly not useful. The letters and reflections appear in his Works.

For the original instigators of the tumults, however, he had no such consideration, uttering against them in Parliament several bitter anathemas; they, he said, and not the ignorant and misled multitude, ought to be hanged; and when some of the leading "Associators" were seen in the lobby of the House, he exclaimed loudly in their hearing—" I am astonished that those men can have the audacity still to nose Parliament;" and had previously remarked that freedom of debate in the Commons of England had arrived at a new æra, when a bludgeoned mob in the street aimed to destroy, and soldiers with fixed bayonets were employed at the doors to protect it.

On the 20th of June, after calm had been restored, petitions were again presented against tolerating Popery, to which neither Ministers nor Opposition would give any countenance. Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke spoke for three hours each against reviving such an intolerant spirit; the latter after expressing the warmest attachment to the Church of England, avowed that he abominated any thing like intolerance, moving five resolutions to this effect, and in reprobation of the late excesses, which were carried. He also thwarted popular prejudice on another point. A bill had passed the Commons to prevent Catholics from being permitted to give scholastic instruction to Protestants, when, finding it likely to be productive of some injustice, he drew up a petition to the other House, which had so much effect with Lord Thurlow, that on the third reading he quitted the woolsack, and by one of his usual forcible assaults drove it out of the House without a division.

The humanity of Mr. Burke, exerted on another occasion, gave a fillip to the ingenious malice of the daily press. A man, it seems, had been sentenced to the pillory at St. Margaret's Hill, Southwark, for attempts at an atrocious offence, when the multitude stoned him so as to occasion almost immediate death; and for noticing this in the House of Commons with a remark on its cruelty as being so much more severe a sentence than the law awarded, a newspaper chose to indulge in some silly but most slanderous reflections; for which a rule for a criminal information was obtained against the editor, though, on apology not pressed. Five years afterwards, on repeating in his place the same remarks on a nearly similar occurrence in Bristol, the slander was reiterated, when finding it necessary to bring an action against the printer, the jury awarded him, there being no attempt at defence, 150*l.* damages. It is remarkable that shortly after this, Lord Loughborough himself a judge, had to appeal to a jury against the same unprincipled and abominable insinuations, which had no other foundation than the same party, or personal hostility as in the case of Mr. Burke, and he received the same damages.

In this year also another more extensive and important scheme of humanity occupied the ever active mind of the Member for Bristol; no less than the abolition, or material alleviation, of the horrors of the slave trade; and a variety of thoughts on the subject, with a sketch of a new negro code, were committed to paper. There were many reasons, however, against bringing forward such a measure then: the incessant contests which American affairs occasioned in parliament; the odium which such an innovation on the rights of trade and property would bring on Opposition from the West India interest; the policy of confining their strength to the more pressing grievance, the war; the impossibility of Opposition by itself succeeding in such a design under any circumstances; the temper of the nation, which was not at all ripe for the discussion; and perhaps the unpopularity he had already incurred at Bristol, and which such a proposal would increase to exasperation. Time has shown that he judged rightly. Mr. Wilberforce, who took it up six years afterwards, has found it necessary to devote a whole life to the subject.

The dissolution of Parliament in the beginning of autumn, necessarily carried him to Bristol, to ascertain whether the rejection he had apprehended was likely to take effect. To a meeting held at the Guildhall, on the 6th of September, he delivered his celebrated speech, the best ever uttered on such an occasion, and perhaps never excelled by any thing he spoke elsewhere. Were it always in the power of eloquence to conciliate, or argument to persuade, there were in this enough of both to redeem not only the crime of differing in opinion with his constituents, but more serious offences, had such been committed. Declining all apology for opposing the wishes, though he was satisfied, he said, not the interests, of those he represented, he entered on his defence. The charges against him were four;—in not visiting the city more frequently—in supporting Lord Beauchamp's Insolvent Debtor's Bills—the Irish Trade Acts—and the relief granted to the Roman Catholics. Each of these he defends with extraordinary ability; rendering even the common and temporary affair of an election, a medium for promulgating great and permanent political truths—such as the hustings never before supplied us with, and never since, except perhaps in the instance of another great man lately at Liverpool.

"Gentlemen," said he, in summing up, "I do not here stand before you accused of venality, or of neglect of duty. It is not said that in the long period of my service, I have, in a single instance, sacrificed the slightest of your interests to my ambition, or to my fortune. It is not alleged that to gratify any anger, or revenge of my own, or of my party, I have had a share in wronging or oppressing any description of men, or any man in any description. No! the charges against me are all of one kind—that I have pushed the principles of general justice and benevolence too far; further than a cautious policy would warrant; and further than the opinions of many would go along with me.—In every accident that may happen through life, in pain, in sorrow, in depression and distress—I will call to mind this accusation, and be comforted."

The main body of the Dissenters, of the Corporation, and much of the weight of property and respectability* in the city, were decidedly in his favour; the million were of another opinion, and against numbers it was useless to contend. "Were I fond of a contest," said he, "I have the means of a sharp one in my hands. But I have never been remarkable for a bold, active, and sanguine pursuit of advantages that are personal to myself."

The resolution to decline being immediately taken, and as readily declared in another speech, brief, but expressive, he thanked the electors for the favours they had already conferred, and honestly confessed his regret that they would not continue them; adding, that in sorrow, not in anger, he took his leave; in person as he deemed most proper, rather than by letter as was most customary; for as in the face of day he had accepted their trust, in the face of day he accepted their dismission, conscious that he had nothing to be ashamed of. The appeal was very powerful, and the scene almost affecting; increased by the feelings of many of the auditory on the sudden death of one of the candidates, "showing us," said Mr. Burke at the moment, no less truly than pathetically, "what shadows we are, and what shadows we pursue!" Bowing to the sheriffs, to the other candidates, and to the assembled multitude, he quitted the hustings, and Bristol thus suffered itself to become a subject for reproach for ever.

---

* The following, among other resolutions, passed amid a large and most respectable body of the Corporation and Merchants:

"Bristol, Sept. 6, 1780.

"At a great and respectable meeting of the friends of Edmund Burke, Esq. held at the Guildhall, this day,

"The Right Worshipful the Mayor in the Chair;

"Resolved—that Mr. Burke as a representative for this city, has done all possible honour to himself as a senator, and a man; and that we do heartily and honestly approve of his conduct as the result of an enlightened loyalty to his Sovereign, a warm and zealous love to his country, through its widely-extended empire; a jealous and watchful care of the liberties of his fellow subjects; an enlarged and liberal understanding of our commercial interest; a humane attention to the circumstances of even the lowest ranks of the community; and a truly wise, politic, and tolerant spirit in supporting the National Church with a reasonable indulgence to all who dissent from it; and we wish to express the most marked abhorrence of the base arts which have been employed without regard to truth and reason, to misrepresent his eminent services to his country."

If a popular election were always the exercise of sound discretion, the rejection of so great a man would be strange; but being, as it is, too often the result of tumultuous feeling and prejudice, the wonder ceases. Of all eminences, it has long been observed, that that which is raised on popular admiration is the most slippery, and the most treacherous, continually falling from under the wisest and soundest statesmen, without the slightest demerit on their part. It may be termed the tight rope of politics, "a tremulous and dancing balance," on which none but the most dexterous political posturemaster can hope to maintain himself long; he cannot depend upon his footing a moment: for that line of conduct which the more enlightened know to be right, and he himself feels to be conscientious, is as often as not that for which he may be cried up by the multitude to-day, and pulled down to-morrow.

So was it with this distinguished statesman. He had merely exerted toward Ireland the same liberality of principle he had shown to America; and while the one constituted his greatest merit in the eyes of Bristol, the other became his most serious offence. The injury accruing to his own interests, on account of thus legislating in favour of the general interests of the kingdom on the one hand, and of oppressed individuals (small debtors* and Roman Catholics) on the other, was considerable. The representation of Bristol, from its wealth, commerce, and population, was certainly an important object to Mr. Burke. Mr. Burke was in every respect a high honour to Bristol. A great man and a great city are made for each other, and none, but the most obvious and weighty reasons should be permitted to separate them.

---

* In allusion to the inquiries of Mr. Howard respecting that unhappy class, he drew the following admirable character of that celebrated philanthropist.

"I cannot name this gentleman without remarking that his labours and writings have done much to open the eyes and hearts of mankind. He has visited all Europe—not to survey the sumptuousness of palaces, or the stateliness of temples; not to make accurate measurements of the remains of ancient grandeur, nor to form a scale of the curiosity of modern arts; not to collect medals or collate manuscripts, but to dive into the depths of dungeons; to plunge into the infection of hospitals; to survey the mansions of sorrow and pain; to take the gauge and dimensions of misery, depression, and contempt; to remember the forgotten, to attend to the neglected, to visit the forsaken, and to compare and collate the distresses of all men in all countries. His plan is original, and it is as full of genius as it is of humanity. It was a voyage of discovery; a circumnavigation of charity. Already the benefit of his labour is felt more or less in every country. I hope he will anticipate its final reward, by seeing all its effects fully realized in his own.

Malton again received, and, for the remainder of his political life, retained him as her representative; "and the humble borough," remarks a judicious historian,* "gained by such a member an honour which the greatest commercial city might reasonably envy."

It is thus that such places, not wholly under the influence of a popular spirit, make up in practical utility what they want in theoretical perfection; and one portion of the kingdom is enabled to repair the prejudice or injustice of another. Without this resource he might not, at least for a time, have re-entered Parliament; he might have been disgusted, reasonably enough, with the popular cause; a sense of wounded pride might have carried him into retirement, to become merely a spectator of scenes in which nature and practice had so eminently fitted him to act and to adorn. His services, which in number and in value exceed perhaps those of any two hundred country gentlemen who ever sat in Parliament put together, would have been lost to his country. Much also would have been lost, and this is no trivial loss, in national fame. Great men are a species of valuable public property, always the pride, often the chief stay and support of their country; the stars which enlighten and beautify her intellectual firmament, and by the numbers and radiance of whom her glory is raised and extended in the esteem of other nations. How many illustrious names might have been lost to the roll of English history, had it not been for the anomaly of close boroughs!

When he arrived at Bristol, previous to the election, Mr. Noble tells (for it is believed he is still alive) an anecdote of the habitual disdain with which Mr. Burke treated what he called "loose libels," and that strain of vulgar abuse so long directed against him, even when its contradiction promised to be useful to his interests. The rumours of his being a Roman Catholic, of being educated at St. Omer's, and others of the same stamp, had, it seems, reached Bristol after the riots in London, and being believed by many of the electors in a certain sphere of life, Mr. Noble begged his sanction to write to Mr. Shackleton to receive from him, as his preceptor, a formal contradiction of them. The reply was a negative; "To people who can believe such stories," said he, "it will be in vain to offer explanations." His friend repeated the recommendation more pressingly: "If I cannot live down these contemptible calumnies, my dear friend, I shall never deign to contradict them in any other manner," was again the answer.

---

* John Adolphus, Esq.—History of England.

Some years after, on a question which arose on the impeachment of Mr. Hastings, a passage to the same effect is contained in a letter written by him to a Member of the House of Commons:—"*It would be a feeble sensibility on my part, which at this time of day would make me impatient of those libels, which, by despising through so many years*, I have at length obtained the honour of being joined in commission with this Committee, and becoming an humble instrument in the hands of public justice."

Another anecdote of him, while at Bristol, is related by the same gentleman, regarding what his friend Fox probably thought one of his deficiencies. Passing an evening at Mr. Noble's house, his hostess in jest asked him to take a hand at cards, when he pleaded ignorance. "Come then, Mr. Burke," said she, playfully, "and I shall teach you," and he accepting the challenge in the same good humour, with a witty remark on the power of female temptation, they sat down to the children's game of *beggar my neighbour*. This turning out in his favour, he was so much amused with the idea of conquering his instructress, as to rally her, with much effect, during the remainder of the evening.

In the discussions at the India-House he sometimes took part, and in those of November, respecting the appointment of a new governor to Madras, bore testimony to the talents and character of his old acquaintance Lord Macartney, ultimately the successful candidate. On the 24th of this month, his son Richard, who had entered himself of the Middle Temple, in November, 1775, was called to the bar, and took chambers, intending to practice, had his health permitted. Here more than one acquaintance of the writer of these pages had occasion to call upon him some time afterwards; he was a young man of talents much above mediocrity, the pride and delight of his father, whom he occasionally assisted in researches connected with parliamentary duty, and is said to have written "The Yorkshire Question;" a reply to Major Cartwright's plan of reform; and several letters and tracts in reference to the politics of the time.

In the session of 1780 and 1781, Mr. Burke took a leading part on the message announcing the rupture with Holland, a proposal by Lord North, to make the India-Company pay a large sum for the renewal of their privileges, a motion by Mr. Fox for an inquiry into the conduct of the war, another by Mr. Minchin on the supposed neglect of 3000 British seamen, in Spanish prisons; followed by one by himself on the treatment of the people of St. Eustatius, by Sir George Rodney and General Vaughan, supported by all the Opposition; on the latter subjects, the humanity of his disposition was complimented as being only equalled by the brilliancy of his genius.

In February, the Reform bill was again introduced, in accordance with the solicitations of a variety of political associations, whose thanks and compliments, flowing from many parts of the kingdom, formed some counterpoise to the ill-humour of Bristol. Much of his illustration, and some of his reasoning on the point were new; his reply is said to have surpassed every thing that could be conceived on a subject seemingly so exhausted; the encomiums on his ability, eloquence, and wit, even from the ministerial side, were unprecedented, and a common remark in the House was "that he was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform." Lord North, who was not the last to applaud, delayed for some days to give it a negative, though adjured by the mover to do so at once if he meant it, without giving further anxiety to him or the House, "and be, at least for one day in his life, a decisive Minister." In support of the measure Mr. Pitt made his first speech in Parliament.

It was about this period that the kind feelings of Mr. Burke were appealed to by a young and friendless literary adventurer, subsequently an eminent poet, who, buoyed up with the praise his verses had received in the country, and the hope of bettering his fortune by them in London, had adventured on the journey thither, with scarcely a friend or even acquaintance who could be useful to him, and with no more than *three* pounds in his pocket. This trifle being soon expended, the deepest distress awaited him. Of all hopes from literature he was speedily disabused; there was no imposing name to recommend his little volume, and an attempt to bring it out himself only involved him more deeply in difficulties;

the printer had deceived him, and the press was at a stand, from the want of that stimulus which puts much of the world in motion. Hearing, however, or knowing something of an opulent Peer, then in London, who had a summer residence in his native county, he proposed to dedicate to him his little volume; the offer was accepted; but, on requesting a very small sum to enable him to usher it into the world, received no answer to his application. His situation became now most painful; he was not merely in want but in debt; he had applied to his friends in the country, but they could render him no assistance; his poverty had become obvious to the persons with whom he resided, and no further indulgence could be expected from them; he had given a bill for part of his debt, which, if not paid within the week, he was threatened with a prison; he had not a friend in the world to whom he could apply; despair awaited him which ever way he turned.

In this extremity of destitution, Providence directed him to Mr. Burke. He had not the slightest knowledge of that gentleman, other than common fame bestowed;—no introduction but his own letter—no recommendation but his distress; but "hearing that he was a good man, and presuming to think him a great one," he applied to him with a degree of success far beyond any possible expectations he could form. Mr. Burke, with scanty means himself, and unbribed by a dedication, did that which the opulent Peer declined to do; but this was not all; for he gave him his friendship, criticism, and advice, introduced him to some of the first men in the country, and very speedily became the means of pushing him on to fame and fortune.

As a critic also, Mr. Burke was frequently called upon by authors for his opinion and correction, by those who could procure an introduction to him; and about this time another candidate for poetic fame, the Rev. Mr. Logan, a Scotch clergyman, sent a present of a pleasing volume of poems, which was answered by a complimentary note, and an invitation to breakfast in Charles-street.

Another anecdote of his humanity, occurring nearly at the same period, was lately related by an Irish gentleman of rank who professed to know the circumstances, by way of contrast to the eccentric but mistaken kindness of an Irish philanthropist of our own day to one of the same class of unhappy objects. Walking home late one evening from the House of Commons, Mr. Burke was accosted by one of those unfortunate women who linger out existence in the streets, with solicitations, which perceiving were not likely to have effect, she changed her manner at once, and begged assistance in a very pathetic and seemingly sincere tone. In reply to inquiries, she stated herself to have been lady's maid in a respectable family, but being seduced by her master's son, had at length been driven through gradations of misery to her present forlorn state; she confessed to be wretched beyond description, and looked forward to death as her only relief. The conclusion of the tale brought Mr. Burke to his own door; turning round with much solemnity of manner, he addressed her, "Young woman, you have told a pathetic story; whether true or not is best known to yourself; but tell me, have you a serious and settled wish to quit your present way of life, if you have the opportunity of so doing?" "Indeed, Sir, I would do any thing to quit it."—"Then come in," was the reply; "Here Mrs. Webster," said he to the housekeeper, who lived in the family for about 30 years, "here is a new recruit for the kitchen; take care of her for the night, and let her have every thing suitable to her condition, till we can inform Mrs. Burke of the matter."—She remained a short time under the eye of the family, was then provided with a place, and turned out afterwards a well-behaved woman.

A motion by Mr. Fox, in June, to repeal the Marriage Act, excited particular notice, on account of bringing forward Mr. Burke as its chief opponent, the two friends supporting their respective views with extraordinary ability. Those of the former were considered too general and too philosophical for a practical statesman, who knew so much of the world; while the latter seemed to keep his eye more on facts, on the truth of his general principles, and on their application to the condition of society in this country. It was rejected without a division; and, in fact, Mr. Fox took up the matter from a family feeling,—the aversion shown by the Duke of Richmond's family to his mother's marriage with his father. Some of the ideas thrown out by the Member for Malton are said to have furnished hints to Mr. Malthus.

It is amusing sometimes to look back and trace the contradictory opinions entertained of statesmen,—the most vilified of all the animals in the creation—at different periods of their career, and the little credit they receive for the most honest opinions and conduct, when unwilling to go all lengths with the zealots of different parties. At this time the Tories considered Mr. Burke one of their most formidable adversaries; while some of the more violent Whigs thought him little better than half a Tory; the former occasionally hinted that he treated rank, wealth, and connexion, with too little ceremony; the other that he was too aristocratical in his notions for a bold and decided Whig. "I admired, as every body did, the talents, but not the principles of Mr. Burke," says Bishop Watson, writing of this particular period, and his reasons for questioning the latter are rather remarkable for a bishop. —"His opposition to the clerical petition first excited my suspicion of his being a high Churchman in religion, and a Tory, perhaps an aristocratic Tory, in the state."

Alluding to these accusations in the speech on the Marriage Act just mentioned, he gives the substance of those doctrines, which, having more fully illustrated ten years afterwards, he was then charged with having broached for the first time;—doctrines which teach no more than the strict preservation of all the rights of all the orders, high and low, in the state; and which, whether called Whiggism, or Toryism, is at least sound patriotism.

"I am accused, I am told abroad, of being a man of aristocratic principles. If by aristocracy they mean the peers, I have no vulgar admiration, nor vulgar antipathy towards them; I hold their order in cold and decent respect. I hold them to be of an absolute necessity in the constitution; but I think they are only good when kept within their proper bounds. . . . .

"If by the aristocracy, which indeed comes nearer to the point, they mean an adherence to the rich and powerful against the poor and weak, this would, indeed, be a very extraordinary part. I have incurred the odium of gentlemen in this House, for not paying sufficient regard to men of ample property. When, indeed, the smallest rights of the poorest people in the kingdom are in question, I would set my face against any act of pride and power, countenanced by the highest that are in it; and if it should come to the last extremity, and to a contest of blood—my part is taken; I would take my fate with the poor, and low, and feeble.

"But if these people come to turn their liberty into a cloak for maliciousness, and to seek a privilege of exemption, not from power, but from the rules of morality and virtuous discipline, then I would join my hand to make them feel the force, which a few, united in a good cause, have over a multitude of the profligate and ferocious."

To a new and brilliant recruit to the banners of Opposition, already rich in fame, and with whom as a member of the club he had been for some time acquainted, he is said to have given some friendly though disregarded advice on his first efforts in Parliament, which were made in the course of this session.

This was the witty and ingenious Mr. Sheridan, who, possessed of talents the most useful, and even splendid, only wanted industry to become equal to some of the greatest names of the age. Even as it was, indolent and dissipated, neglecting study and averse to business, his uncommon natural powers always placed him in the first rank. A good poet, he would not cultivate poetry; the first comic dramatist of the age, and almost in our language, he deserted the drama; a shrewd politician, he wanted that solidity of sentiment and conduct, which, after all, form the surest passports of public men to public favour; a powerful orator, he would not always cultivate that degree of knowledge which could alone render it effective and convincing; he was ready, shrewd, and remarkably cool in temper in debate, but like some advocates at the bar, whose example few prudent men would desire to imitate, he seemed often to pick up his case from the statements of the opposite side. Power, fortune, and distinction, all the inducements which usually work on the minds of men, threw out their lures in vain to detach him from pleasure, to which alone he was a constant votary.

With all these deductions, his exertions in Parliament were frequent and vigorous; his wit and ingenuity never failed to amuse and interest, if they did not persuade; with greater preparation for Parliamentary discussion, few could be more effective. His speech on the Begum charge, of more than five hours' continuance, and considered one of the finest orations ever delivered in Parliament, drew from Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, and Mr. Pitt, compliments of a high and unusual order; and from the house generally, and the galleries,—members, peers, strangers of all sorts by common consent, vehement shouts of applause and clapping of hands. With such powers, who but must regret their inadequate exercise, and unhonoured close? For it is melancholy to remember that this admired man, the friend of the great, the pride of wits, the admiration of senates, the delight of theatres, the persevering apologist of his party for so many years, should at length be permitted to terminate his career in distress; adding another to the many instances too familiar to us, of great talents destitute of the safeguard of ordinary prudence.

Inferior to Mr. Burke, to whom, at one time, he professed to look up as a guide, in some natural gifts, in moral strength of character, in extent of knowledge, in industry, in what may be termed the higher order of political genius, there were in their history several points of resemblance. Natives of the same country, they sprang from that rank in life which must work its own way to wealth or eminence. From the study of the law in England, they were both weaned by the attractions of general literature; and from this again, by the more animating bustle of politics; it was their fate to struggle the greater part of their lives in the up-hill path of Opposition for a momentary enjoyment of power, no sooner obtained, than as suddenly snatched from their grasp.

Ill success, however, did not shake their constancy; disinterestedness was in an eminent degree a merit of both. For amid unparalleled shiftings of principle and of party, by men who had not the apology of stinted or embarrassed fortunes to plead, they continued faithful to their leaders; a fidelity not less honourable than remarkable, for it was imitated by few. In addition to these coincidences, the similarity may be carried a point further. Though always foremost in the support of their party, they rose superior to party feelings when the public safety seemed endangered—Mr. Burke on occasion of the riots in 1780, Mr. Sheridan during the mutiny at the Nore. The French Revolution misled the latter, as it did many other able and ingenious, though perhaps not profound, men; and, in the language of the former, they became "separated in politics for ever."

A resolution of Congress to recal General Burgoyne from his parole in England induced Mr. Burke, at the solicitation of the latter, to address a letter to Dr. Franklin, then American ambassador at Paris, in August, 1781, requesting his influence to get the order rescinded. The philosopher was more than usually polite in reply. "Mr. Burke always stood high in my esteem; and his affectionate concern for his friend renders him still more amiable;" expressing for him in another sentence what no other English statesman enjoyed, "great and invariable respect and affection."

In support of the amendment to the address moved by Mr. Fox, November 27th, 1781, Mr. Burke uttered a bitter philippic against the principle as well as the conduct of the war. The figure of shearing the wolf, in allusion to the taxation of America, made a very strong impression on the House; after an animated exposition of the folly of claiming rights which could not be enforced, he went on to say—

"We had a right to tax America, and as we had a right, we must do it. We must risk every thing, forfeit every thing, think of no consequences, take no consideration into view but our right; consult no ability, nor measure our right with our power, but must have our right. Oh! miserable and infatuated ministers! miserable and undone country! not to know that right signifies nothing without might, that the claim without the power of enforcing it was nugatory and idle in the copyhold of rival states, or of immense bodies of people. Oh! says a silly man full of his prerogative of dominion over a few beasts of the field, there is excellent wool on the back of a wolf, and therefore he must be sheared. What! shear a wolf? Yes. But will he comply? have you considered the trouble? how will you get this wool? Oh! I have considered nothing, and I will consider nothing but my right: a wolf is an animal that has wool; all animals that have wool are to be shorn, and therefore I will shear the wolf. This was just the kind of reasoning urged by the Minister, and this the counsel he had given."

The omission in Lord Cornwallis's capitulation of any article to secure the American loyalists serving in the British army from the vengeance of their countrymen, formed another topic of indignant reproach with Mr. Burke. Next day he returned to the charge with undiminished spirit; followed in a few days by a renewal of the motion respecting St. Eustatius; a general feeling existing that the people had been unjustifiably treated, which the heavy damages afterwards awarded by juries against the commanders served to confirm.

Shortly afterward he presented a petition to the House, privately conveyed to him, written on the blank leaf of an octavo volume with black lead pencil (pen and ink being denied him), from Mr. Laurens, American Envoy to Holland, who, being captured on his passage, had been committed to the tower a year before; the seeming rigour of the case exciting all his sensibility, the cause of the prisoner was taken up with such warmth, that he was liberated a few days afterward, and soon exchanged for General Burgoyne.

Several of the politicians of Ireland being in the habit of consulting him on the public measures there, Lord Kenmare at this moment solicited his opinion on a bill then in progress for the alleged relief of the Roman Catholics, particularly in matters of education; to which he replied in a letter dated 21st February, 1782, soon after published without his consent in the Irish metropolis. This piece, which has all his accustomed force and perspicuity, was written amid a multiplicity of business, public and private, allowing him so little leisure that it was said to be dictated sometimes while eating a family dinner, sometimes while dressing, or even engaged in familiar conversation. In public he was occupied, after the recess, in supporting some motions of Mr. Fox against Lord Sandwich and the Admiralty Board; on the employment of General Arnold as "a rebel to rebels;" on the Ordnance Estimates; in an able reply to the new American Secretary (Mr. Welbore Ellis;) on General Conway's motion for terminating the war with the colonies, which reduced the Ministerial majority to one; and on many other topics, among which were the new taxes, ten in number, imposed during the contest, urging towards the conclusion of a powerful speech; "What fresh burthens can the Noble Lord add to this taxed and taxing nation? We are taxed in riding and in walking, in staying at home and in going abroad, in being masters or in being servants, in drinking wine or in drinking beer; in short in every way possible."

When at length the struggle terminated (19th March, 1782,) by the resignation of the Ministry, amid the triumphant shouts of Opposition, he afforded an example of moderation checking the too clamorous joy of his friends, by reminding them how many difficulties they had to encounter; how necessary it was to guard against their own desires, self opinions, vanity, love of power, or emolument; how much the public expected from them; and how much they stood pledged to achieve.—Recollecting the dictation which Mr. Fox often wished to assume in the deliberations of the party, it is difficult to believe that this lecture was not chiefly meant for him; from a misgiving in the mind of his coadjutor (so truly verified by the result) that his rashness, or impatience of superior lead or influence, would ultimately ruin the party.

A letter from Dr. Franklin, on the subject of the exchange of Mr. Laurens for General Burgoyne, drew from Mr. Burke the following characteristic letter, the morning of the first decisive expression of opinion by the House of Commons against the American war:—

"DEAR SIR,

"Your most obliging letter demanded an early answer. It has not received the acknowledgment which was so justly due to it. But Providence has well supplied my deficiencies; and the delay of the answer has made it much more satisfactory than at the time of the receipt of your letter I dared to promise myself it could be.

"I congratulate you as the friend of America, I trust as not the enemy of England, I am sure as the friend of mankind, on the resolution of the House of Commons, carried by a majority of 19, at two o'clock this morning, in a very full house. It was the declaration of 234; I think it was the opinion of the whole. I trust it will lead to a speedy peace between the two branches of the English nation, perhaps to a general peace; and that our happiness may be an introduction to that of the world at large. I most sincerely congratulate you on the event.

"I wish I could say that I have accomplished my commission. Difficulties remain. But as Mr. Laurens is released from his confinement, and has recovered his health tolerably, he may wait, I hope, without a great deal of inconvenience, for the final adjustment of this troublesome business. He is an exceedingly agreeable and honourable man.* I am much obliged to you for the honour of his acquaintance. He speaks of you as I do; and is perfectly sensible of your warm and friendly interposition in his favour. I have the honour to be, with the highest possible esteem and regard, dear Sir,

"Your most faithful and
"Obedient humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"London, Charles Street,
Feb. 28th, 1782."

---

* This character was perfectly just, being distinguished afterwards in his native country for uncommon disinterestedness and contempt for the common scrambling after place and power, too common even in republican America. He resided after the peace chiefly on his eatate, and on his death, in 1792, desired his body to be burned to ashes in his garden by nine favourite negroes, which was accordingly done.

[redacted]

CHAPTER VIII.

Appointed Paymaster General.—Lord Shelburne.—Coalition.—India Bill.—Mr. Pitt.—Mr. Burke elected Lord Rector of the University of Glasgow.—Reception in the New Parliament.—Letter to Miss Shackleton.

Thus terminated the most hard and ably fought party struggle in our history, and with it virtually the war in which it originated; but it did not leave Mr. Burke as it found him, undisputed leader of his party.

Mr. Fox, his political pupil and friend, who had been for some time treading closely on his heels, now advanced to an equality in the conduct of Parliamentary business, and finally took the lead. For this there were some obvious reasons. Inferior to his tutor, as a great and commanding orator, and what ought to be of more consequence to the country—as a wise and sound statesman, he frequently excelled most men in vigour of debate; but more especially possessed a peculiar tact beyond all his contemporaries and all his predecessors without exception, for being at the head of a political party. He enjoyed all the weight which birth and connexion (and these are essential objects among the Whigs of England) could give: his acquaintance with the great was necessarily extensive, and his friendships nearly as general; with the young by community of pursuits and pleasures, with the old and staid, by community of information and talent. His fortune was considerable, had it not been squandered, his temper in general easy, his thirst for popularity excessive, his manners were adapted to gain it, and his sacrifices to ensure it; his very faults and weaknesses were with many more matter of jest and favour than of censure. Some of his doctrines were more to the taste of the people, who placed confidence in his sincerity; and with scarcely a shilling he could call his own, they were pleased to think him in spirit the most independent.

In all these points he had the advantage over his coadjutor, who also suffered some loss of weight by his rejection at Bristol, by his disregard of the popular voice when he thought it ill directed, by a more uncompromising temper, by being supposed a dependant of Lord Rockingham, and, among a certain class, by being a native of Ireland. There was unquestionably a jealousy of the merits and influence of Mr. Burke, even among many who advocated the same cause, which nothing but very uncommon powers and exertions enabled him to surmount, and of which he complained. Under all these disadvantages, however, he had kept the lead in the Commons for ten years; and had Lord North fallen three years sooner, would have been made efficient Minister; the common opinion, early expressed at the table of Lord Rockingham, being, that "he was the only man who could save the empire from dismemberment." Even just before that Minister's resignation, he himself remarks he had obtained a considerable share of public confidence, notwithstanding the jealousy and obloquy which had assailed him during much of his career. "I do not say I saved my country—I am sure I did my country much service. There were few indeed that did not at that time acknowledge it."

That Mr. Fox should now prevail, with Westminster at his back, with unbounded popularity in the nation, and the advantage of that aristocratic feeling in his favour, obviously inherent in all our arrangements, is not surprising. Mr. Burke, who considered humility in the estimate of ourselves a species of moral duty, submitted to the sense of his party without a murmur. A vain man would have resented this; a weak one complained of it; an ambitious or selfish one probably taken advantage of it on the first opportunity to quit the connexion for ever, and throw the weight of his name and talents into the opposite scale.

In the division of the spoil of office, his share was a seat in the Privy Council, and the Paymaster-Generalship of the Forces, then the most lucrative office in the State, and remarkable for having been held by Lords Chatham, Holland, North, and Charles Townshend, previous to their becoming first Ministers. Considerable surprise was expressed at his not being included in the Cabinet; one reason assigned for which was his desire to purge the office in question, though the real one perhaps was the necessities of his party, which required the Cabinet offices for men of greater family and Parliamentary interest, though of far inferior talents; and also for Lord Shelburne and his friends; who enjoyed a large share of royal favour. It is also true that he drove no bargain on the subject; expressing to his friends sentiments similar to those of a great statesman of the present day*—his willingness to serve, not where ambition might dictate, but where the general interests of government required.

Politics, in fact, unlike literature, is seldom a Republic. Party is Monarchy in miniature, where each must keep an appointed station for the benefit of all, and where other circumstances, independent of talents, must unite to constitute a chief.

But were a man in this country, of great capacity and attainments, though of little influence or fortune, such for instance as Mr. Burke, deliberately to choose his side in politics as he would a profession—that is, for the advantages it is likely to bring—he would probably not be a Whig. That numerous and powerful body is believed to be too tenacious of official consequence—and prone to consider high rank, leading influence, and great family connexion, rather than talents of humbler birth, as of right entitled to the first offices of government; they are willing to grant emolument, but not power, to any other than lawyers who do not necessarily interfere with their views; an opinion which, notwithstanding the professon of popular principles, is believed to have made them sometimes unpopular, and driven many useful allies into the ranks of the Tories.

---

* Mr. Canning's speech at Liverpool, September, 1822.

His Majesty received his new servants unwillingly, nor is it matter for surprise; it is hard for any man, and most of all perhaps for a king, to receive into his confidence those who for nearly twenty years together have thwarted his favourite views. So strong was the aversion to the Rockinghams, that Lord Shelburne, leader of another branch of Opposition, was offered the Treasury instead; but feeling the want of weight and connexion in Parliament, he prudently declined it. Lord Rockingham, in consequence, insisted upon certain stipulations, which were—to concede independence to America, to introduce a system of economy into all the departments of the State, and to carry some popular bills through Parliament.

The ministerial labours of the Paymaster-General were more considerable than those of any Member of the Cabinet. His Reform Bill passed both Houses, though much mutilated, finding, what most reformers in time discover, that it is easier to propose public correctives when out of office, than to carry them into effect when in. Many good reasons, indeed, were assigned for the alterations; and, as it was, no similar purgation of ministerial influence is known in our history, thirty-six offices eligible to be held by Members of Parliament being at once abolished. He also declared his readiness, whenever the sense of the House would go with him, to adopt every part of the plan he had proposed.

The bill to regulate his own office was deemed a species of feat in ingenuity, labour, and knowledge of business; the system being so complicated, and the abuses so ancient, that a universal feeling prevailed among his predecessors, down to the lowest clerks, of the hopelessness of the one being simplified, or the other amended. He nevertheless succeeded in it—surrendering to the public the interest and other advantages accruing from the enormous sum of 1,000,000*l.*, which was not unfrequently the amount of the balance in hand. His disinterestedness did not stop there. As Treasurer of Chelsea Hospital he became entitled to the profits of clothing the pensioners, amounting to 700*l.* per annum, and, by a new agreement with the contractor, managed to save 600*l.* more; these sums, which as regular perquisites of office might have been enjoyed without impropriety or notice, he generously threw into the public Treasury. Considering his pecuniary circumstances, these were no ordinary sacrifices, and they gained from the world just as much credit as such things usually do—little notice and no recompense.

He agreed in the propriety of opening the negociation with Holland, in a variety of censures passed by Mr. Dundas on the Government of India, and in conceding independence to the Irish Parliament, expressing in the following letter to Lord Charlemont some ingenious sentiments in his usual (especially in epistolary writing) elegance of manner:—

"My dear Lord,

"The slight mark of your Lordship's remembrance of an old friend, in the end of your Lordship's letter to Lord Rockingham, gave me very great satisfaction. It was always an object of my ambition to stand well with you. I ever esteemed and admired your public and private virtues, which have at length produced all the effects which virtue can produce on this side of the grave, in the universal love of your countrymen. I assure you, my Lord, that I take a sincere part in the general joy; and hope that mutual affection will do more for mutual help, and mutual advantage, between the two kingdoms, than any ties of artificial connexion whatsoever. If I were not persuaded of this, my satisfaction at the late events would not be so complete as it is. For, born as I was in Ireland, and having received, what is equal to the origin of one's being, the improvement of it there, and therefore full of love, and I might say of fond partiality for Ireland, I should think any benefit to her, which should be bought with the real disadvantage of this kingdom, or which might tend to loosen the ties of connexion between them would be, even to our native country, a blessing of a very equivocal kind.

"But I am convinced that no reluctant tie can be a strong one, and that a natural cheerful alliance will be a far securer link of connexion than any principle of subordination borne with grudging and discontent. All these contrivances are for the happiness of those they concern; and if they do not effect this, they do nothing, or worse than nothing. Go on and prosper; improve the liberty you have obtained by your virtue, as a means of national prosperity, and internal as well as external union.

"I find that Ireland, among other marks of her just gratitude to Mr. Grattan (on which, your Lordship will present him my congratulations,) intends to erect a monument to his honour, which is to be decorated with sculpture. It will be a pleasure to you to know, that, at this time, a young man of Ireland is here, who I really think, as far as my judgment goes, is fully equal to our best statuaries, both in taste and execution. If you employ him, you will encourage the rising arts in the decoration of the rising virtue of Ireland; and though the former, in the scale of things, is infinitely below the latter, there is a kind of relationship between them. I am sure there has ever been a close connexion between them in your mind. The young man's name who wishes to be employed is Hickey.* I have the honour to be, with the highest sentiments of regard and esteem, my dear Lord,

"Your Lordship's most obedient servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Whitehall, June 12th, 1782."

When the news arrived of the great naval victory in the West-Indies, he declined to renew the inquiry against the commander-in-chief, respecting St. Eustatius, saying, that on public grounds he had brought it forward, and on public grounds, if the House thought proper, he would let it drop; and then, after a beautiful apostrophe to the laurel crown of the Romans, concluded by adding—"If there were a bald spot on the head of Rodney, he would willingly cover it with laurels."

By the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who had promised all his influence to the popular cause, and who afterwards took much credit to himself with Westminster for the fact, he did not attend a discussion on Parliamentary Reform, which he always opposed;—making a sacrifice, in this instance, to the popularity of his friend's name, which he never made to his own.

---

* Another instance of Mr. Burke's kindness; he had already brought forward a poet and painter of celebrity, and now wished to do the same by a sculptor, but he died young. A good bust of Mr. Burke, by him, is in existence.

Administration, on the whole, did much for popularity, and would probably have succeeded in their aim of acquiring it, when the Marquis of Rockingham, who had been seized with the prevailing complaint, named influenza, unexpectedly died. Lord Shelburne, without any intimation to Mr. Fox, Mr. Burke, Lord John Townshend, or others of the party attached to the deceased Nobleman, instantly vaulted from the Home Department into the vacancy; and they, unable or unwilling to act with him, immediately resigned.

This, which has been usually considered a hasty measure, certainly did not meet with general approval; but there is no foundation for an assertion made by some, who profess to have known something of the political secrets of the time, that it arose from the irritation of Mr. Burke. The suggestion, on the contrary, came from Mr. Fox, whose importance, from the situation he held, was more directly affected. It is undoubtedly true that both, while they disagreed with the new head of the Treasury on some public points, entertained a strong personal dislike to the man; he, in return, is said to have felt quite as cordial an aversion to them (particularly to Mr. Burke,) from a jealousy of being constantly outworked and outshone by them, in Parliament, added to their greater estimation in popular opinion, and standing in the midst of his path to power.

Lord Shelburne, with very considerable talents, extensive information, and, perhaps, a better acquaintance with the foreign relations of the country than Mr. Fox, who filled that department, had, unfortunately for himself, acquired a character for political bad faith. He had been designated a Jesuit, and nick-named *Malagrida* for some years; he was accused of insincerity, of absolute duplicity, and even of want of common veracity toward his colleagues to which, on the present occasion, some slighter circumstances gave countenance, though it is but justice to observe, the more serious charges were never proved.

By his friends, the revolt of the Rockinghams was ascribed to petulence, to the disappointed ambition of Mr. Fox; to the desire of Mr. Burke to place the Duke of Portland at the head of the Treasury, and to consequent discontent at finding the Earl's influence in the highest quarter so much greater than their own. Of this superior influence, there had been already abundant proofs; in being offered the Treasury, as already stated, before the Marquis; in securing almost unknown to that nobleman, the Garter for himself; a heavy pension for Colonel Barré; a peerage, a pension, and the unusual honour of a seat in the Cabinet as Chancellor of the Duchy of Lancaster, for Mr. Dunning, both his intimate friends and chief supporters in the House of Commons; besides an understood obligation on the part of Mr. Burke, at least for the present, to let the cutting-edge of his Reform bill glance harmless over the D chy in question.

The pension to Colonel Barré, exciting animadversion in the Commons, his Lordship urged that it was the proposal of Lord Rockingham himself, conferred in lieu of the Pay-office, which had been given to Mr. Burke; and that he had the letter in his pocket in which the offer was made. The latter gentleman and Lord John Townshend utterly denied any such arrangement, called the story an utter fabrication, and dared him to produce the letter;—the letter never was produced. Mr. Fox, Mr. Courtney, Mr. Lee, reiterated the charge of breach of veracity on other points. These circumstances account, in some measure, for Mr. Burke's aversion to the new Minister; that he thought his own motives pure there is no doubt, for he could not, he said, give a stronger instance of sincerity, than, with a small fortune and large family, to sacrifice a lucrative office to public principle; and to the moment of the Usher of the Black Rod arriving to summon the House to hear the prorogation, he did not cease from strong animadversion.

On the re-assembling of Parliament, December 5th, 1782, he assailed the speech and its authors, on that and the following days, with a flow of wit and ridicule, which kept the House in a continual roar of laughter; at other times, particularly on the 11th, varying his attack by invective, or serious argument. On the former occasions, Mr. Pitt, the new Chancellor of the Exchequer, seemed nettled into something like petulant and angry observations.

The Minister, who had in the mean time signed the preliminaries of peace, discovering his deficiency in parliamentary strength, deputed Mr. Pitt toward the end of autumn, to wait personally on Mr. Fox in the last private interview these eminent men ever had, to attempt a reconciliation; the latter however would not hear of Lord Shelburne remaining at the head of the Treasury. On the contrary, he preferred a junction with Lord North, who, by the numbers still attached to him in the House, held the balance between Ministry and Opposition; and, by throwing his weight into the latter scale, formed that celebrated coalition which, by the vote of the 21st of February, condemning the peace, threw out the Ministry, and succeeded to their places. The Paymaster-general resumed his office; his brother Richard became one of the secretaries to the Treasury, and, on the death of Lord Ashburton, Recorder of Bristol.

Part of the odium of forming this amalgam of parties fell upon Mr. Burke, though with little justice; for though he concurred in it as a matter of necessity, he neither interfered much with the arrangements, nor defended it with his accustomed vigour; and had, in fact, strongly objected to it, till overpowered by the persuasions of Mr. Fox, who was both eloquent and urgent with him on the occasion. It is also true, that Lord Shelburne had made overtures previously to Lord North, to coalesce with him; it was, therefore, fighting the Minister with his own weapons.

Mr. Eden, afterward Lord Auckland, was the first proposer, and direct mediator, in forming the coalition. Lord John Townshend, always distinguished for the strictest principle and integrity, avowed himself with pride one of the authors of it; Lord Loughborough recommended it; Mr. Sheridan, though doubtful at first, ultimately approved it; Colonels North and Fitzpatrick conducted the negociation to a successful conclusion; Mr. Fox himself nobly said, that his friendships were eternal, his enmities only momentary; and after forty years' experience and reflection, Lord Erskine* has found nothing in it to condemn. The true secret of the unpopularity of the coalition was the subsequent attempt to carry the India bill.

Whatever share, therefore, belongs to Mr. Burke, in the business of the coalition—and it certainly was not great—he acted under the unanimous feeling of the leading Members of his own party, and of all the Members of that with which they joined. He had, in fact, fewer reasons for avoiding it than Mr. Fox. Once or twice, indeed, he had threatened Lord North with impeachment; at other times he paid many compliments to his personal integrity and amenity of manners, while the Minister as if to evince the propriety of the latter compliment often rendered justice to the splendid powers of his adversary, even in moments when most severely assailed by him; and in the earlier periods of his power, kind offices had not unfrequently passed between them. The dislike of Mr. Burke was political, pointing solely at the Minister; that of Mr. Fox was political, and personal to the man. He had said that the Minister's blood ought to expiate his misdeeds—that he was the greatest criminal in the State—that he would be afraid to trust himself with him alone—and that, if he ever acted with him he would be content to be thought for ever infamous; intemperate and inconsiderate assertions which his own generous nature was the first to condemn. For using them, Lord North frankly forgave him; for recanting them, the public never did.

---

* A few hours after this was written, the death of this distinguished lawyer was announced in the newspapers.

One of the first acts of the Paymaster-General, and for which he incurred considerable censure, was to restore Messrs. Powell and Bembridge, cashier and accountant of the office, who had been dismissed by Colonel Barré for alleged mal-practices. His feelings in this instance mastered his prudence. The truth was, he did not believe them personally guilty, from the unreserved disclosures they had made to him of the affairs of the office; he conceived it also a design on the part of Lord Shelburne and his friends, to lessen the popularity of Mr. Fox by throwing imputations on the memory of his father, whose accounts formed the subject of dispute; and still more, the accused had furnished useful information to him for his Reform bill.

He opposed, on the 7th of May, in an excellent speech, the fragments of which appear in his Works, Mr. Pitt's motion for Parliamentary Reform. The latter took an opportunity of retaliating, on an accusation advanced against the Paymaster of altering and expunging clauses according to his own taste, in a bill connected with his office; and though the Speaker pointed out the misconception of the Member who made the charge, Mr. Pitt clung to it with some pertinacity as a handle for censure; —so little do statesmen in opposition differ, when the object is to criminate the more fortunate possessor of power.

In the midst of this jarring and contention, Mr Burke, as is generally believed, found time to address a long and interesting though anonymous paper to Barry, containing free but friendly criticisms on his great pictures, then exhibiting in the rooms of the Society of Arts. The ability shown by the writer interested the painter so much, that he eagerly returned an answer, as directed, to the bar of the Cocoa Tree, soliciting acquaintance or further correspondence; no rejoinder was ever made, nor the actual author positively known, but adding to his acknowledged love for the arts, the regard shown for the individual to whom it was addressed, with the internal evidence of style and matter, the writer could be no other than his great patron. His reasons for not avowing himself were probably a desire to avoid unprofitable personal argument with an intractable spirit; or to prevent any increase of that unreasonable jealousy felt by the latter at his intimacy with Sir Joshua Reynolds, from whom he might think the observations addressed to him, came. Of this jealousy, Barry, who was in temper the Rosseau of painters, could not divest himself, thinking his patron's friendship for the great artist of the age, a degree of neglect shown to his own fame and merits.

The recess of Parliament was devoted to the concoction of the celebrated India bill, of which Mr. Burke is said to have been a joint penman with the reputed author, though this has never been proved. It is certain indeed that he was the only one of the Ministry who knew much of the matter in progress previous to its coming before the public, and it is also certain that it was submitted to his revision; he might likewise have been the author of the second or supplementary bill, ascertaining the powers of the new Government, and securing the rights and interests of the natives; but all the great and leading principles were undoubtedly those of Mr. Fox.

The bold and innovating features of the measure bore little resemblance to the usual cautious legislation of the member for Malton; neither is it probable that he who was never accused of egotism, should applaud so highly what, if the allegation were true, must have been so much indebted to his own hand; and in addition, it may be observed, that in a debate ten years afterwards on another subject, he said, he remembered that Mr. Fox's attention was so much taken up in 1783 with his India bill, that he could attend to nothing else. Such an assertion in his presence, and when they were no longer intimate, would scarcely have been hazarded had the speaker himself been equally concerned.

The motives which dictated this important measure, however misrepresented at the time, ought no longer to be matter of doubt. It is the idlest of all things in a country like England, to talk of a preconcerted scheme to overawe the King, annihilate the prerogative, render the voice of the people nugatory, or fix any ministry perpetually in place; assertions which may serve a momentary purpose, but are unworthy of the pen of history; and their best refutation is to be found in the circumstances that followed the attempt to carry this very bill. The administration of the government of India could not well be worse conducted. Its proceedings for more than twenty years had called forth constant animadversion in Parliament, and in the nation; and had even become a source of reproach with foreigners upon our national fame and character for justice. Nothing could be more self-evident than the necessity for some reform.

The mode of reform now attempted was quite another matter. It bore the stamp of a great, an energetic, an inventive, but an arbitrary mind. It imparted to the legislature a new power unknown to the constitution, of appointing the commissioners who were to exercise the functions of government over that vast continent; it annihilated with little preface or apology the chartered rights of the India Company; took from it the management of its property by open force; offered no compromise; soothed no objections or prejudices; and attempted no conciliation; the principle, and the mode of carrying it into effect, were equally objectionable. It was distinguished by another striking peculiarity—for it had the effect of uniting the King and the people for the first time against a majority of the House of Commons.

Mr. Burke, seeing through a different medium, urged its success with all his powers. He reserved himself chiefly for the second reading, the 1st of December, 1783, when, in a crowded house prepared to hear something uncommon, he delivered one of those surprising orations, which, in vigour, in ingenuity, and in that forcible yet expansive grasp with which he usually fastens on a subject, seemed to leave the energies of other men far behind.

Disclaiming several questionable arguments urged in its support, his reasoning turns principally on the necessity of the measure—the breach of the articles of its charter by the Company, and consequently, as in other agreements, the nullity of the compact—the enormous abuses of power by the Company's servants—the utter inability for a series of years to correct these abuses, by remonstrance, or censure, or execration; by the voice of the nation, by the voice of Parliament, by the voice of the directors of the company themselves, by the voice of many of the highest servants of that Company on the spot where the abuses were committed. It was only from a conviction that the system was wholly incorrigible, that he, for one, would ever lend his hand to the subversion of that or any other established mode of government. The present bill would guard against future robberies and oppressions, and its highest honour and title would be that of securing the rice in his pot to every man in India.

"The most ignorant individual in the House," says a contemporary member, "who had attended to the mass of information which fell from the lips of Burke on that occasion, must have departed rich in knowledge of Hindostan. It seemed impossible to crowd greater variety of matter applicable to the subject into smaller compass; and those who differed most widely from him in opinion, did not render the less justice to his gigantic range of ideas, his lucid exposition of events, and the harmonic flow of his periods."

"The speech of Mr. Burke," in the words of another contemporary, "upon this grand turning point of the administration, was perhaps the most beautiful, sublime, and finished composition that his studies and his labours had produced."

While his zeal and eloquence assisted to propel the bill through the Commons, he was seen along with Mr. Fox, standing on the steps of the throne, in the other

House, during the discussion, anxious and agitated, striving by the influence of personal character and talents to do the same service in the Lords. Other and superior influence, however, was also at work. The King, more alarmed for his authority than perhaps the occasion required, exerting his natural weight among the Peers, caused the bill to be thrown out, and immediately flung the Ministry after it, by a message to the Secretaries of State, at one o'clock in the morning of the 19th of December, to deliver up the seals of office : thus this famous measure, upon which so much labour and talent had been expended, became the lever by which to prize its authors out of office.

The three months' struggle which ensued between Mr. Pitt, who accepted the Treasury, and the Opposition who constantly outvoted, censured, and threatened him with even weightier proofs of disapprobation, has little to do with the personal history of Mr. Burke, who exerted himself less on this than on any other great emergency of his political life. He probably felt the force of the difficulty—that the King had an undoubted right to choose his own Minister, and against the Minister so chosen no specific offence could be alleged ; the weight of the argument, therefore, was against them. It is also true that he always thought and always said that Mr. Pitt had worked himself into office unfairly, if not unconstitutionally.

Mr. Fox fought this unprecedented political battle with uncommon skill ; and Mr. Pitt kept his ground with equal ingenuity, courage, and perseverance, backed by the favour and exhortations of his Majesty, who had taken so strong an antipathy to the former gentleman, that sooner than again receive him as first minister, he had expressed a determination to quit England for Hanover. Perseverance rendered this singular resolution unnecessary, for the Opposition majority gradually dwindling from 54 to 1, Parliament was dissolved in March, 1784; the new elections ran every where in favour of Ministry, attended by every symptom of popular sympathy and satisfaction, no less than 160 of their opponents being thrown out.

Mr. Pitt, who accomplished this victory, was one of those rare examples of men who, by the union of uncommon talents with peculiar good fortune, seem cut out by nature to influence or to govern kingdoms. He was a lucky man, however, before he was a great one; his good fortune placed him in a station which, at this period of life, and little acquaintance with the public, he had no reason to expect; his talents enabled him to maintain the important post he had thus gained. It was an unprecedented occurrence in this, or perhaps any other European country, to see almost a boy placed at the head of public affairs; to see him snatch it from grey-headed experience and unquestioned fame; to retain it from youth to manhood, and from manhood to the borders of age, with no diminution of royal or popular favour, rendering the State, in more than one sense, a species of patrimonial inheritance.

In looking back to the first view, and of course more inexperienced years of his administration, it is impossible not to admire the skill, the mingled prudence, and moderation, with which it was even then conducted. He had to provide a government for India, to revive trade, to regulate and increase the revenue, and to restore many other national interests nearly ruined by the American war. He had to face in Parliament a combination of by far the ablest men this country ever saw, sometimes indeed in vehement contention, sometimes anticipating, sometimes bending to their suggestions, but commonly holding the even tenor of his way so wisely, that they had few substantial opportunities for finding fault. To uphold him, indeed, he enjoyed in an unusual degree the patronage of the people and the King; yet without such a firm hold upon either, on the ground of established reputation or previous services, as to be certain of its continuance, without the exertion on his own part of great political dexterity. Taken as it were upon trial, he had his character to acquire; his father's name, however, was a tower of strength, and the first and readiest passport to public esteem.

To both King and people it was obviously necessary for him to pay assiduous court, and he did this without any seeming art or effort, oscillating to one side or the other as circumstances required; in favour with both, yet subservient to neither, though exposed occasionally to the accusation of insincerity. If to the popular side he gave his vote, to the other he was charged with lending his influence—a charge certainly unjust; yet, even if true, the former might be an assertion of principle, the latter possibly an unavoidable sacrifice to expediency, which every Minister, and almost every man, must occasionally make in his connexion with office or with the world. Up to the period of the French Revolution he had an arduous part to play in Parliament, and he played it well; after that event he gained an accession of strength which fixed him more firmly in his seat than ever. His manners were somewhat distant, with neither the amenity of Fox nor the frankness of Burke. His moral character stood high; his prudence, the better part of talents perhaps as well as of courage, was felt; his personal disinterestedness experienced and acknowledged; his rectitude of intention universally believed. Altogether, the estimation in which he was held as a public and private man, carried him through even the disasters of the French war with little decrease of popularity.

His eloquence was that of business—precise, logical, singularly fluent, with a command and choice of the very best words, hitched into the very best places, which the most gifted men rarely possess, and to which a tall figure, and fined toned voice, gave irresistible effect. It was deficient, however, in variety, in splendour, in felicity of illustration, in what may be termed those flashes of genius, which not only throw light on an intricate and difficult point, but sometimes succeed in cutting the knot of a sophism, which cannot be clearly unravelled; it dealt little in classical quotation or allusion, though he was an excellent classic; it did not seem so much the emanation of a vast and comprehensive, as of a bounded but admirably-regulated intellect. There is in it little of passion, and few of those overwhelming bursts which surprise us frequently in Burke, and sometimes in Fox; in all these respects he was perhaps inferior to both, particularly to the former, and more especially in wit, sarcasm (though his sarcasms were frequent and bitter,) and in vigour and fertility of imagination. He adheres indeed closer to the point than either, but on the whole warms and interests us less, possibly from standing on the defensive. At the same time there was in his speeches a simplicity and seeming integrity of manner that won confidence to what he said; and, besides being more brief than those of his great rivals, he possessed the still greater merit in the eyes of a cautious politician—that of never committing himself, of not saying too much or too little on doubtful points, of being able at any time to deliver "a King's Speech off-hand." Few had more power over the House of Commons, where his speeches told with great effect. But though of a quite different character from those of his father, they are likely to share the same fate as compositions—that is, never to be consulted a second time for any extraordinary originality of thought, exhibitions of genius, or the very highest attributes of eloquence.

In the new Parliament, which met in May, 1784, the chief effort of the late Paymaster was in moving (June 14th) a representation to the King on the late dissolution; "a paper," said Mr. Fox, some years afterwards, "which would make the fame of some men, but which in the number and excellence of Mr. Burke's productions was, perhaps, scarcely remembered." He predicted several of the inefficiencies of Mr. Pitt's India bill, which a very competent judge,* in a passing tribute to his memory as one of the wisest men and greatest orators of our country, says, have been realised to the letter.

He was not viewed, however, with much favour by many of the new Members of the House. In common with Mr. Fox, he had incurred considerable odium, but, unlike him, had taken no pains to work it off. His habits being more retired, he did not now, or at any time, sufficiently court intercourse and familiarity with one class of society, or the bustle and noisy freedom, the shaking of hands, and hoisting upon shoulders of another; the latter, in fact, were not much to his taste. So strong was the prejudice, or, as it was considered, combination against him in the House, that the moment of his rising became a signal for coughing, or other symptoms of pointed dislike. The speech introducing the representation to the King was not replied to, and towards its conclusion was received with affected laughter. On three India questions of minor moment, whether owing to the unpopularity of himself, or of the subject, he was overpowered by continued and violent vociferation. And on another of these occasions, instead of threatening, like a distinguished modern leader* of Opposition, not long ago, when similarly assailed, "to speak for three hours longer," he stopped short in his argument to remark, that "he could teach a pack of hounds to yelp with more melody and equal comprehension."

---

* Sir John Malcolm.—Political History of India.

At another time, having occasion to rise with papers in his hand, a rough hewn country gentleman, who had more ear perhaps for this *melody of the hounds* than for political discussion, exclaimed with something of a look of despair, "I hope the Honourable Gentleman does not mean to read that large bundle of papers, and bore us with a long speech into the bargain." Mr. Burke was so swoln, or rather so nearly suffocated, with rage, that, utterly incapable of utterance, he ran out of the House. "Never before," said the facetious George Selwyn, who told the story with great effect, "did I see the fable realised—a lion put to flight by the braying of an ass."

Muzzling the lion was in fact the colloquial term used at the time for these attempts to prevent him from speaking; and as several of Mr. Pitt's younger friends were among the principal actors concerned, the Minister was accused of promoting it. It is certain that he then thought him his most formidable opponent, chiefly on account of the variety of his powers, which made it difficult to give him, what Mr. Fox's more straight-forward mode of attack commonly received, a complete answer. The same reason, that of muzzling the lion towards himself, has been assigned for the Minister allowing the inquiry into the conduct of Mr. Hastings to go on, after having in the first instance decidedly put his face against it.

---

* Right Honourable George Tierney.

An able anonymous writer of that day expresses his surprise at the indecorous interruptions "given to a man possessed of an eloquence with which all that remains of antiquity must lose in the competition;" but the truth was, they had been so frequent towards other popular men, that on a motion by Sir George Saville, a session or two before, the curious spectacle was exhibited of the Speaker, (Mr. Cornwall) severely reprimanding a large body of Members in a long speech, as "a set of gentlemen who spent most of their time elsewhere, and did not deem it necessary to attend to any part of the debate, in order that they might decide with decency, or vote with conviction."

In the month of April, when, on account of being so lately ejected from office and from public favour, an act of respect became additionally kind, the University of Glasgow elected Mr. Burke its Lord Rector, and re-elected him in the following November. His installation drew a large concourse of spectators, including all distinguished for rank or eminence in the surrounding country, anxious to see a man of whom they had heard so much; several of the literati, among whom was Professor Dugald Stewart, accompanied him from Edinburgh. An elegant speech expressed his thanks for the honour done him, his regard for the learning and talent assembled within the walls in which they were, and esteem for the national character, by which he confessed he had been favourably impressed. "They are a people," said he, in a conversation with Mr. Windham, "acute and proud, of infinite pretension, and no inconsiderable performance; and, notwithstanding their offensive egotism and nationality, which it seems a point of conscience to push down every body's throat, on the whole very estimable." He afterwards took a tour to the Highlands, and found not only an increase of pleasure, but of health, from the journey.

In the autumn, his house at Beaconsfield was entered in the night, and robbed of a quantity of plate and other articles of value; in allusion to the conveyance which it appeared brought the thieves from London, and carried them and their booty back, he used familiarly to term it the *curricle* robbery. Not long afterwards he found time to draw up for a distant relation, Mr. E. P. Burke, the outline of a course of "Lectures on Arts, Manufactures, and Commerce," intended to be filled up and delivered by that gentleman at Merchant Taylor's Hall, Bristol; they are said to have borne the stamp of his characteristic genius, knowledge, and comprehensive acquaintance with commercial principles and history.

About the same time, death withdrew from the world his old acquaintance Dr. Johnson, from whom, in the vicissitudes of 27 years, no estrangement occurred to interrupt their mutual admiration and regard. Visiting him in his last illness, with some other friends, Mr. Burke remarked, that the presence of strangers might be oppressive to him. "No, Sir," said the dying moralist, "it is not so; and I must be in a wretched state indeed, when *your* company would not be a delight to me." He followed him to the grave as a mourner; and in contemplating his character, applied to it a fine passage from Cicero, which might equally suit his own—*Intentum enim animum quasi arcum habebat, nec languescens succumbebat senectuti.*—When some one censured Johnson's general rudeness in society, he replied with equal consideration and truth, "It is well, when a man comes to die, if he has nothing worse to accuse himself of than some harshness in conversation." He often remarked that Johnson was greater in discourse than even in writing, and that

Boswell's Life was the best record of his powers; in 1790, he became one of the committee formed to erect a statue to his memory.*

During the summer, he received a visit from his old friend Mr. Shackleton and his daughter, an ingenious lady, already introduced to the reader under the name of Leadbeater, who, charmed with the situation, wrote a short poem descriptive of the scenery, the mansion, and a faithful sketch of its owner, of which the following forms the introduction.

All hail, ye woods, in deepest gloom array'd!
Admit a stranger through your rev'rend shade;
With timid step to seek the fair retreat,
Where Virtue and where Genius fix their seat:
In vain retiring from the public gaze,
Not deepest shades can veil so bright a blaze.
Lo! there the mansion stands in princely pride;
The beauteous wings extend on either side;
Unsocial pomp flies from the cheerful gate,
Where hospitality delights to wait;
A brighter grace her candid smile bestows,
Than the majestic pillar's comely rows.
Enter these ever-open doors and find
All that can strike the eye, or charm the mind:
Painting and sculpture there their pride display,
And splendid chambers deck'd in rich array.

---

* The late Dr. Joseph Warton, in a note to his edition of Dryden's Poetical Works, speaking of Dr. Johnson's criticisms, says, "I have been censured, I am informed, for contradicting some of Johnson's critical opinions. As I knew him well, I ever respected his talents, and more so his integrity; but a love of paradox and contradiction, at the bottom of which was vanity, gave an unpleasant tincture to his manners, and made his conversation boisterous and offensive. I often used to tell the mild and sensible Sir Joshua Reynolds, that he and his friends had contributed to spoil Johnson, by constantly and cowardly assenting to all he advanced on any subject. MR. BURKE ALONE KEPT HIM IN ORDER."

But these are not the honours of the dome
Where Burke resides, and strangers find a home;
To whose glad hearth the social virtues move,
Paternal fondness and connubial love,
Benevolence unwearied, friendship true,
And wit unforced, and converse ever new,
And manners, where the polished court we trace,
Combined with artless nature's noble grace.

* * * * *

When the sad voice of indigence he hears,
And pain and sickness, eloquent in tears—
Forsakes the festive board with pitying eyes,
Mingles the healing draught* and sickness flies;
Or, if the mind be torn with deep distress,
Seeks, with kind care, the grievance to redress.
This, this is Edmund Burke—and this his creed—
This is sublime and beautiful indeed.

Mr. Burke wrote the following letter in reply:

"My dear Miss Shackleton,

"I ought not to have suffered myself to remain so long at a disadvantage in your mind. My fault is considerable, but not quite so great as it appears; for your letter went round by way of Carlisle, and it was a good while before it came to my hands. It ought indeed to have been my care to have made the earliest possible acknowledgment, where nothing more was required; and in a case where, indeed, there was little more in my power to do than to tell you, in a few plain and sincere words, how extremely sensible I was of the honour you have done me, by making this family and this place the subject of some of the most beautiful and most original verses that have for many years been made upon any place or any persons.

---

* There was in this (as indeed in every other part of the character) something more than mere poetic compliment of the fair authoress. In illness, he used to administer medicine to his family and household; and on one occasion having given Mrs. Burke a wrong one, he suffered great mental agony for a few hours, till assured that no ill consequences were likely to arise from it.

"They make us all a little more fond of ourselves, and of our situation. For my own part I will not complain, that when you have drawn a beautiful landscape, you have put an old friend of your father's as a figure in the fore-ground; nor shall I pretend that I am not pleased even with the excess of partiality, which has made him an object worthy of appearing in such a scene. The scene itself, fine as it is, owes much to the imagination and skill of the painter; but the figure owes all to it. You great artists never draw what is before you, but improve it up to the standard of perfection in your own minds. In this description I know nothing of myself; but what is better, and may be of more use, I know what a good judge thinks I ought to be.

"As to your picture of this part of the country, I cannot help observing, that there is not the least of commonplace in it. One cannot apply it equally to every country, as most things of this kind may be turned. It is particular and appropriated; and that, without being minute or tedious in the detail. Indeed, it is a sweet poem; and shows a mind full of observation, and retentive of images in the highest degree. Some of the lines are not quite so finished as to match the rest; and some time or other, I may take the liberty of pointing them out to you; and some of the rhymes hitch upon words, to which nothing (not even you) can give grace. But these are lesser blemishes; and easily effaced either by omission or a trivial change. You will excuse this freedom. But in so fine a poem, in which your kindness for an old friend of your father has given me so great an interest, you will naturally expect that I should wish for the perfection which I know you can give *your* work with a little more of *your* care.

"Pray excuse this very late and very imperfect acknowledgment of the great favour you have done me. I cannot plead business in favour of my delay. I have had a great deal of leisure time. At the moment I write this, I never was more busy in my life; and, indeed, thus much is in favour of activity and occupation, that the more one has to do, the more one is capable of doing, even beyond our direct task. I am ever, with Mrs. Burke's, my brother's, and my son's most affectionate regards to you, and to all Ballitore, which we love with great sincerity, my dear Miss Shackleton,

"Your most faithful and most obliged
"And obedient humble servant,
"EDMUND BURKE.

"Beaconsfield, Dec. 13th, 1784."

CHAPTER IX.

Speech on the Nabob of Arcot's Debts.—Impeachment of Mr. Hastings.—Visit to Ireland by Mr. Burke.—Mr. Hardy's Account of him.—Preface to Bellendenus.—Epitaph on the Marquis of Rockingham.

IN the Session of 1785, commencing the 25th of January, Mr. Burke took some part in the Westminster scrutiny (in which affair the Minister was accused of showing as much unworthy resentment to Mr. Fox, as toward the member for Malton in the preceding session,) in the plan of a sinking fund, and in the Irish propositions. On the latter question, though siding chiefly with

Opposition, he did not take so active a part as was expected, a feeling of delicacy preventing him, as he said, from balancing minutely and invidiously, conflicting claims between the country of his nativity, and that which had raised him from nothing to stations of high public trust and honour, with the power to legislate, not for any one class of persons, or for any one spot however dear that spot might be to him, but for the general interests of the kingdom at large.

Mr. Pitt's proposal for reform in the representation drew from Mr. Burke some pointed animadversions, demanding how *he*, of all men, could assume that the people were not sufficiently represented in that House, when he was daily in the habit of boasting that his own place and preponderance there, were solely owing to the voice of the people? On the bill of the minister for regulating the public offices, which Mr. Sheridan termed a mere rat-catching measure, he was equally severe. Contrasting its biting and impracticable economy with the profusion countenanced in India, which would ultimately fall on the shoulders of England, he used the following series of extraordinary figures; new and forcible indeed, conveying a striking impression to the mind, but objectionable from their number, and from following each other in such quick succession; passages of this kind, however, are rare in his works:

"He (Mr. Pitt) was desirous to draw a resource out of the crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury. He was rasping from the marrowless bones of skeleton establishments an empirical alimentary powder to diet into a similitude of health the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation. But while Parliament looked with anxiety at his desperate and laborious trifling, while they were apprehensive that he would break his back with stooping to pick up chaff and straws, he recovers himself at an elastic bound; and with a broadcast swing of his arm, he squandered over his Indian field a sum far greater than the amount of all these establishments added together."

This *Indian field* now chiefly occupied Mr. Burke's thoughts, as he himself expressed it, "at all hours and seasons, in the retirements of summer, in the avocations of the winter, and even amid the snows (alluding to the ill reception he had experienced the preceding session) that had lately been showering on his head." On the first day of the session he moved an amendment to the Address, but did not press it, on account of the speech being silent on the affairs of India, subsequently supporting motions by other members on the same fruitful subject.

But his great effort, February 28th, was on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot, one of those remarkable outpourings of a most fertile and vigorous intellect, which, on an unpromising theme, and under the disadvantage of rising last in the debate, seemed to combine all that could instruct, dazzle, and even overpower the hearer. It has been said to be in some parts florid. But in energy, in rhetorical address, in a minute knowledge of India, and especially the intricacies of the question itself, in the boldness of his attacks upon those of the Company's servants who were considered by their intrigues to have laid the foundation of these debts, in the clearness of his narrative and detail, it was rated equal to any thing ever delivered in Parliament. The oppressions exercised upon a neighbouring state, Tanjore, by the Nabob and his agents, had already produced much animadversion, and Mr. Burke being well informed of the circumstances from private information, as well as public documents, characterised the chief agent and counsellor of his highness on these occasions, Mr. Paul Benfield, as "the old betrayer, insulter, oppressor, and scourge, of a country which has for years been an object of an unremitted, but unhappily an unequal struggle, between the bounties of Providence to renovate, and the wickedness of mankind to destroy."—Some of the spirit of the speech is said to have evaporated in the printed report.

Shortly after this period he suffered great agony of mind for some time, in consequence of a newspaper account of the loss, in a violent storm off the coast of Holland, of a Harwich packet, in which his son had embarked for the continent. Fortunately the report proved untrue; he arrived in safety, and after visiting Holland, Flanders, and some of the adjoining states, was received with some distinction in the Court and capital of France. During his father's tenure of power, he had been appointed Joint-Receiver with Dr. King of the revenues of the Crown Lands, held for life; and after the death of the Marquis of Rockingham, Earl Fitzwilliam had made him auditor of his accounts.

It was at the opening of the next session, January 24th, 1786, that Mr. Burke entered on one of the most tempestuous scenes of his life—nearly the whole of which was a political storm—in the prosecution of Mr. Hastings, late Governor General of India, who had recently arrived in England.

Much consideration is necessary adequately to appreciate the degree of moral courage requisite for this undertaking, nothing so arduous or laborious having ever fallen to the lot of a member of the English Legislature; for though the work was divided, much the greater part unavoidably fell to his share. It demanded not only uncommon capacity of mind, but the most effective and popular and Parliamentary *working* talents; an utter disregard of difficulty; a vast fund of local knowledge; a perseverance in mental and bodily labour not to be conquered; a contempt for obloquy and reproach of every kind; an acquaintance with the powers, interests, habits, actual condition, intrigues, and even villanies of nearly all India, such as no man, and scarcely any body of men out of the country, could be expected to possess.

The accused, besides, was no inconsiderable man. He was supposed to possess the personal good opinion of the King.* He had acquired the favour of the Board of Control. He enjoyed the support of the India Company, which had profited by his sway. He had aggrandised the nation itself, which, satisfied with its acquisitions, felt little curiosity to inquire into the means; and in fact the subject, for two or three years before, would scarcely be listened to in Parliament. He had governed a vast empire for a series of years, and was of course enabled to profit by the weight, in all cases great, which authority bestows. He had not only amassed a competent fortune himself, but, what was of more consequence to his political interest, had enriched more men than any half dozen Prime Ministers of England put together. He had necessarily many friends and a vast number of apologists, several in Parliament, others in different situations of influence, who, from the oblique morality with which all India questions were treated, scarcely considered as improprieties there, what in England they would have stigmatised as unquestionable crimes. In addition to all these, the evidence had to come from a vast distance; qualified by some who thought the blame ought rather to fall on the agents than on the principal; by some who hesitated to condemn proceedings which had been the source of their own gain; by some who shrunk from the odium of coming forward, or being considered as public accusers; all which circumstances were observed to operate powerfully in the subsequent evidence given upon the trial of the Governor General.

---

* During the trial, a caricature was exhibited of Mr. Hastings trundling His Majesty in a wheelbarrow, with the label, "What a man buys he may sell." "Well," said the King good-humouredly on seeing it, "I have been represented in many extraordinary situations, but in a wheelbarrow is really something new."

Against all these considerations, against the opinion of some of his own party, and in some degree against his own personal interests, Mr. Burke obstinately persevered, winning the nation over to his opinion before the end of the session, and what was of no less consequence, constraining the Minister, from marked hostility to the inquiry at first, to the observance of rigid impartiality. If he eventually failed in convicting the accused on account of legal technicalities, it is less matter for wonder, than that under so many obstacles, and in the teeth of so many powerful interests, he could carry the cause to a decision. But the sentence of the House of Lords was a matter of minor importance in his opinion, for the moment the impeachment was voted by the Commons, he felt that the great end for which he undertook it—public justice, was answered.

To those who knew little of his character, the motive for this gratuitous labour remained a puzzle, or was solved by the silly idea unworthy of notice, that it arose from a slight shown by the Governor General to Mr. William Bourke. It is possible, remembering how the inquiry was approved by Mr. Fox, that some latent feeling existed of indirectly justifying the India bill, by exposing more fully to general indignation the enormities that measure was meant to correct. But the great and direct inducement, beyond all question, was a detestation of any thing like oppression or injustice inherent in the man; not simply as a moral principle, but an ingrafted feeling; ardent, and perhaps too unrestrained for the imposing station he occupied in the country, but which had been shown in all the chief actions of his life, public and private; in upholding against oppression the Commons of America at one time—and the King, Nobility, and Clergy of France, at another; in resenting the tyranny attempted to be exercised over him by Mr. Hamilton in the early part of his life, and what he considered the harshness, reproach, and injury shown him by Mr. Fox, and others of the party, towards its decline; "in whose breast," as he subsequently said of himself, "no anger, durable or vehement, has ever been kindled but by what he considered as tyranny." His philanthropy and integrity were constantly eulogised in the House of Commons by all the eminent men most opposed to him on public affairs, and never more so than during the whole progress of this prosecution.

It is necessary also to remember that it was no sudden burst of passion, no transient or immediate feeling of resentment, but adopted after much and serious deliberation. Since 1780, when, as a member of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, the conduct of Mr. Hastings had been attacked and investigated before him, he had constantly recommended his recal, and expressed an opinion that he deserved punishment. He had no other dislike to that gentleman, he said, than a conviction of his mis-government, persevered in against repeated remonstrances and orders; he knew nothing otherwise of him; he, and the rest of the Committee, had begun with Sir Elijah Impey, and only picked up Mr. Hastings in their way. His attention being thus excited to a subject so important to the good of our Indian empire, there appeared ample matter for further inquiry, as almost every fresh arrival from the East added to the list of alleged oppressions or offences by the Governor General. Strong dissatisfaction, alternating with votes of approbation, had been expressed at his conduct previous to this, by the Court of Directors; but orders for recal were so intermingled with orders to remain, that to many, not in the secret, the proceedings at the India House became a riddle;—the main solution of which was, that the Directors thought many of his measures wrong, and desired his return; the Proprietors simply found them profitable, and therefore wished him to remain.

In 1776, the former voted his recal; the latter rescinded the order. Shortly afterward, Mr. Grant and Mr. Macleane, a former friend of Mr. Burke and now the confidential agent of Mr. Hastings, arrived and tendered the resignation of the latter, which was accepted; but the Governor General, finding himself taken at his word, denied having given that gentleman any such authority, and resolutely kept his station; and as Mr. Macleane was lost on his return to India, this extraordinary misunderstanding was never explained to the world. In 1779, 1780, 1781, in settling the government, he was continued. In 1782, Mr. Dundas, as chairman of the Secret Committee, moved a string of the severest resolutions against him, and among others his recal which was ordered accordingly; but the Proprietors having then the power, by the constitution of the Company, again negatived the order. At length, in February, 1785, he quitted Bengal of his own accord, just as Lord Macartney had been appointed to it from Madras, but whose assumption of the supreme authority it was declared Mr. Hastings and his party had determined to resist even by force, had that nobleman reached Calcutta before he embarked.

On reaching England, the directors passed a vote of thanks for his long and meritorious services, though for years they had complained that his proceedings were objectionable, that he despised their authority, and never paid any regard to their orders when at variance with his own opinion. And Mr. Dundas had already declared, that "Mr. Hastings rarely quitted Calcutta that his track was not followed by the deposition of some prince, the desertion of some ally, or the depopulation of some country."

All these circumstances, in addition to the specific offences laid to his charge, tended to confirm Mr. Burke in his purpose, and to lead him to believe that his motives at any rate for inquiring into the conduct of such an imperious servant could not be questioned. Alluding to these during the preliminary proceedings he observed :

"Least of all could it be said, with any colour of truth, that he was actuated by passion. Anger, indeed, he had felt, but surely not a blameable anger; for who ever heard of an inquiring anger, a digesting anger, a collating anger, an examining anger, or a selecting anger? The anger he had felt was an uniform, steady, public principle, without any private intermixture; that anger, which five years ago warmed his breast, he felt precisely the same, and unimpaired, at that moment."

"Let who will shrink back," said he, touching on the same theme, in 1785, "I shall be found at my post. Baffled, discountenanced, subdued, discredited, as the cause of justice and humanity is, it will be only the dearer to me. Whoever, therefore, shall at any time bring before you any thing towards the relief of our distressed fellow-citizens in India, and towards the subversion of the present most corrupt and oppressive system for its government, in me shall find a weak I am afraid, but a steady, earnest, and faithful assistant."

Ten years afterward, when the trial had been disposed of, he again alluded to his motives.

"Were I to call for a reward (which I have never done,) it should be for those (services) in which for fourteen years, without intermission, I have showed the most industry, and had the least success; I mean in the affairs of India. They are those on which I value myself the most; most for the importance; most for the labour; most for the judgment; most for constancy and perseverance in their pursuit. Others may value them most for the intention. In that surely they are not mistaken."

The obloquy cast on him during the trial, in books, pamphlets, and newspapers, in verse and in prose, in some private and public discussions, not excepting even the courts of law, was nearly as great as that thrown on the Governor General. A stranger, from reading the publications of the day, would have been at a loss to tell which was the accused, and which the accuser. His language, arrangements, the smallest inadvertency committed, and particularly the length of the trial, which arose more from the nature of the House of Lords, and the mode of defence, than from the managers, proved fruitful themes of abuse; to forward which, money to the amount of 20,000*l.* was liberally distributed to the press. An imprudent dispute between the agent of the prisoner, Major Scott, and a printer of a newspaper, disclosed a bill which excited some amusement, the items regularly marked and charged running thus—"Letters against Mr. Burke," "Strictures upon the Conduct of Mr. Burke," "Attacking Mr. Burke's Veracity," and others of similar import; in addition to squibs without number, one of which, Simkin's letters, though not the best of their class, were a tolerably fair and amusing satire on the conduct and speeches of the chief managers, without more malignity towards Mr. Burke than such things prescriptively claim; the opening alludes to one of his peculiarities :—

> With respect to processions, and taking of places,
> By Masters and Judges, and Lordships and Graces,
> According to promise, I now shall describe
> The procession of Burke, and his eloquent tribe.
> First Edmund walks in at the head of the group,
> That powerful chief of that powerful troop;
> What awful solemnity 's seen in his gait,
> While the nod of his head beats the time to his feet.

An epigram, said to be written by the late Lord Ellenborough, then one of the prisoner's counsel, and the idea of which, though not acknowledged, is borrowed from Mr. Burke himself, was delivered to him in a letter just before opening one of the charges in order that the sting might discompose him, but he calmly conveyed it to his pocket without further notice. It is remarkable that the reputed author of this, after being twice or thrice reprimanded on the trial for his violence of language, lived to exhibit on the judgment-seat, where above all other places it is least excusable, the same violence, the same irritability, which he had thus presumed to censure in Mr. Burke as an accuser at the bar; in addition to a proud and domineering spirit and conduct which Mr. Burke never displayed in any station.

A conviction of the guilt of the Governor General remained in his accuser's mind to the last hour of his life, expressed to his friends whenever the subject was mentioned, and to others not so intimate, he was nearly as unreserved: writing to Mr. Moser, April 5, 1796, he says:

"I am rather surprised at your speaking of such a man as Hastings with any degree of respect; at present I say nothing of those who chose to take his guilt upon themselves. I do not say I am not deeply concerned; God forbid that I shóuld speak any other language. Others may be content to prevaricate in judgment; it is not my taste; but they who attack me for my fourteen years' labours on this subject, ought not to forget that I always acted under public authority, and not of my own fancy; and that in condemning me they asperse the whole House of Commons for their conduct, continued for the greater part of three Parliaments."

During the progress of the investigation, Mr. Pitt repeatedly said, that it was conducted by the Right Honourable Gentleman (Mr. Burke) with every degree of fairness, openness, and candour, of which it was susceptible; and Mr. Fox still more frequently stated, that no man but his Right Honourable Friend could have accomplished the more than Herculean task of the investigation itself, or surmounted the incessant and vexatious difficulties at every step thrown in his way. These, during the trial before the House of Lords, were of an extraordinary nature, scarcely a point of evidence being admitted against the prisoner without quibble and cavil, discussion and adjournment, and ultimately from the forms of law, decision in his favour. No reader, perhaps, but a lawyer, will be satisfied with the course of the trial. No conscientious man will be pleased with the means uniformly resorted to, to evade inquiry into the merits of the transactions themselves, which, in the eye of morality, will leave Mr. Hastings, if not a guilty man, at least a suspected one; for, in the opinion of an acute historian, if his accusers did not prove his guilt, he himself did not prove his innocence.* On the question of delay in the trial, urged in 1790, Mr. Burke alleged that though nominally of three years' duration, it was in reality only 64 days, at four hours each day; that the managers could not possibly be responsible for the delays, prorogations, and adjournments of the House of Lords, with which they had nothing whatever to do; that even 64 days was not an unprecedented thing in their own House, for an Election Committee had continued 90 days—and that as the number of the charges and the magnitude of the offences were greater than had ever been laid to the charge of any one impeached by that House, so no fair comparison could be drawn between the periods required for trial. Mr. Pitt repeatedly declared, that, looking to the magnitude and difficulty of the undertaking, he did not think there was any ground for the charge of delay; but if any unnecessary delay existed, assuredly it rested not with the managers. Many attributed it to the artifices of the defendant or his lawyers. Mr. Dundas pointedly said, "there seemed no little art used in the clamour about delay, for it was always raised toward the end of a session, but never at the beginning of it, when steps might possibly be taken to provide a remedy. No share of the blame rested with that House, or with the managers. *If there were any delay in the trial, it lay, he cared not who heard him, or where his declaration might be repeated, at the door of the House of Lords.*"

It appears by computation, that had the House sat as an ordinary Court of judicature ten hours a day, the trial would have been finished in two months.

Another charge urged against Mr. Burke was, the intemperance and asperity of his language toward the prisoner. To this it has been replied, with great truth, that no prosecutor's temper was ever before so tried by difficulties of every kind, by objections, by cavils, by libels without number out of doors; by taunts, by irritating language, and indirect abuse, within; and towards the close of the trial, by the obvious distaste toward the prosecution itself, displayed by some of the Court whom he addressed. One remarkable instance of this excited general notice. On the 25th of May, 1793, when he was cross-examining Mr. Auziol, and pushing him closely and at some length, the Archbishop of York who had already evinced strong symptoms of impatience, and whose son had been in high and profitable employments in India under Mr. Hastings, started up and said, that "he examined the witness as if he were examining not a gentleman but a pick-pocket; that the illiberality and the inhumanity of the managers in the course of the long trial could not be exceeded by Marat and Robespierre, had the conduct of the trial been committed to them." Mr. Burke, with great dignity, and his accustomed presence of mind, replied, "I have not heard one word of what has been spoken, and I shall act as if I had not." The words, however, being published in a newspaper, excited severe comments in the House of Commons, though a motion for further proceedings was lost.

---

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v.

"Upon reading the printed minutes of the evidence with due care," says an historian, with whom, however, from political causes, Mr. Burke does not stand so well as he otherwise might—"I perceive that Mr. Burke treated the witness as an unwilling witness, which he evidently was; as a witness who, though in apable of perjury, was yet desirous of keeping back whatever was unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, and from whom information unfavourable to Mr. Hastings, if he possessed it, must be extorted by that coercion which it is the nature and to the very purpose of cross-examination to apply. Of the tones employed by Mr. Burke, the mere reader of the minute cannot judge; but of the questions there set down, there is not one which approaches to indecorum, or makes one undue insinuation. It was the Right Reverend Prelate, therefore, who betrayed an intemperance of mind, which as ill accorded with the justice of the case, as with the decencies of either his judicial or sacerdotal character."

The same writer gives some general but just reasons for the odium beginning to be cast on the managers towards the conclusion of the trial.—"The favour with which the cause of Mr. Hastings was known to be viewed in the highest family in the kingdom, could not be without a powerful effect on a powerful class. The frequency with which decisions and speeches, favourable to him, were made in the House of Lords; the defence which he received from the great body of the lawyers; the conversation of a multitude of gentlemen from India, who mixed with every part of society; the uncommon industry and skill with which a great number of persons, who openly professed themselves the friends or agents of Mr. Hastings, worked, through the press and other channels, upon the public mind; and not least, the disfavour which is borne to the exposure of the offences of men in high situations in the bosom of that powerful class of society which furnishes the men by whom these situations are commonly filled; all these circumstances, united to others which are not less known, succeeded at last in making it a kind of fashion to take part with Mr. Hastings, and to rail against his accusers."*

The facts of the trial, which immediately relate to the chief manager, are speedily told. On the 16th of June, 1785, Mr. Hastings arrived in England; and on the 20th, Mr. Burke gave notice of an inquiry into his conduct next session. The very day of the meeting of Parliament, Major Scott, trusting, it appeared, to a belief that the Minister would negative the design, called upon him to proceed; and received the reply of the Duke of Parma to Henry IV. of France, when challenged to bring his forces into the field and instantly decide their disputes—that he knew very well what to do, and had not come so far to be directed by an enemy—Mr. Fox declared that if his Right Hon. Friend did not bring it forward, other Members should; a sufficient indication that it was a general, not, as was said, an individual measure.

---

* Mill's History of British India, vol. v. p. 181, 182.

In February, Mr. Burke moved for various papers, and declared his intention to proceed by impeachment at the bar of the House of Lords. In April the charges were delivered in; June the 1st, he opened the first charge,—that of driving the Rohillas from their country—which, though formerly reprobated by the House, was now held not to afford matter for crimination. To the second, that of the tyranny exercised over the Rajah of Benares, Mr. Pitt assented, when the friends of the Governor General accused him loudly of treachery, asserting they had been led to expect, by hints and promises, a different result.

The remaining charges were gone through in the succeeding session, and approved in general by the Minister, Mr. Sheridan opening with the celebrated speech on the Begum charge. A committee of impeachment was then formed; on the 25th of April, the articles were delivered in by the chairman, Mr. Burke, and on the 9th of May considered; when Mr. Pitt, in the very strongest language he could use, voted heartily and conscientiously, he said, for the impeachment. Next day, Mr. Burke accused the prisoner at the bar of the House of Lords, in the name of the Commons of England.

After a few preliminary proceedings, in the session of 1787 and 1788, in which Mr. Burke complained of being wholly crippled by the rejection of Mr. Francis as a member of the committee, Westminster-Hall was opened in form, the 13th of February, when he led the procession, in full dress, as well as the other managers, followed by the House of Commons, Clerks of Parliament, Masters in Chancery, the Serjeants at law, Judges, House of Peers, and Royal Family, the Prince of Wales coming last.

Two days were occupied in preliminary matters; on the 15th, before eight o'clock in the morning, though the proceedings did not commence before twelve, the Hall was crowded to excess, 164 Peers also being present, anxious to hear the opening speech; and the 16th, 17th, (when he particularly detailed the horrible cruelties of a subaltern agent of power,) and 19th, were consumed in this oration, or series of orations, occupying about four hours each day.

From the illness of the King and the absence of the Judges, the proceedings did not commence till the 20th of April, 1789; and next day, he began another powerful oration on the sixth charge of bribery and corruption. Each party soon accused the other of delay, but the managers, to obviate the charge on their part, voluntarily determined to confine themselves to the more serious heads of delinquency, omitting the others for the sake of expedition.

The re-assembling of the new Parliament, in 1790, produced animated discussions in both Houses, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of the old; which was decided in the negative. Public anxiety on the trial had, however, abated, for the forms of the Court, and the complicated nature of the investigation, presented invincible obstacles to that quick progress, which is always necessary to keep alive popular interest on such occasions, and it continued without any other event of consequence, than the severe speeches of the chief manager, often excited, however, by the annoyances he received, till April 23d, 1795, when a verdict of acquittal passed; the Lord Chancellor voting with the Minority, who thought him guilty. The duty of the managers, indeed, had terminated in June preceding, by summing up on the different charges, Mr. Burke being the last; and his concluding oration, which commenced on the 28th of May, continued for nine days. The thanks of the House, moved by Mr. Pitt, and seconded by Mr. Dundas, were immediately voted to the managers.

Mr. Hastings, like every one else under similar circumstances, is fully entitled to the benefit of the verdict; but when not content with this, he or his friends even to a recent period, continued to impugn the motives of the prosecutors, less reserve is necessary in adverting to his general character as an Indian ruler.

He was a man of considerable powers of mind—bold, assuming, and energetic; but possessing that species of energy which, in pushing its own views or interests, seldom stopped to consider the rights, or condition, or feelings of others who stood in his way. He forgot that Princes in India, like those elsewhere, were entitled to some degree of consideration and delicacy, from the station they occupied in their own country; that good faith, justice, and sincerity, are in some degree necessary even in dealing with those of an opposite character; that moderation in the exercise of authority is commonly the wisest policy; that an arbitrary spirit, assumed by the principal in government, is sure to become tyranny in the subordinate agents. From long familiarity with the country, his mind had become perverted to the belief that he was at perfect liberty to adopt the practices of the Asiatics, however unprincipled, in matters of government; forgetting that such conduct compromised the English credit and character, and possibly our future hold of this "Empire of opinion."

Many of his measures were undoubtedly brilliant, many very questionable, not a few at variance with all English ideas of justice, or even expediency; an opinion in which some of the latest and best writers on India concur.* He had so thoroughly entered into the spirit of an Asiatic monarch, that he seemed to think the mere expression of his commands or wishes, evidence enough of their utility and propriety; and that among Hindoos, whenever the slightest necessity pressed him on a point of policy, the end to be answered justified the means; a species of *geographical morality*, as Mr. Burke termed it, which he handled in the severest terms. Just in the same spirit, and on many of the same pleas, did Buonaparte put his foot on the necks of the prostrate Kings and nations of Europe; and in the page of history, the verdict which condemns the one cannot possibly acquit the other.

To try the Governor General was a matter of positive duty, in order to clear the character of the nation. To acquit him was, perhaps, a measure of necessity due to the quibbles of law of which he invariably took advantage, to the ill-defined nature of his power, to the acknowledged difficulties by which he was sometimes beset, and to the spirit of some of his instructions; which, to gratify the cupidity of the Proprietors, seemed to embody the pith of the thrifty father's advice to his son—"make money, my son; honestly, if possible; but at all events make money;"—and he succeeded in pouring into their coffers nine millions, by means which no glossing can make pure.

---

* Mill's History of India.—Malcolm's Political History of India; *passim*.

The length of the trial, indeed, formed no inconsiderable punishment of itself. But the investigation did much good by evincing that, though the Legislature had long slumbered over the acts of the India administration, impunity was no longer to be expected. Its remissness hitherto had been one great cause for the continuance of abuse; and it is certain, that had the conduct of Lord Clive, or of those who deposed and imprisoned Lord Pigott, or of Sir Thomas Rumbold and others, whom Mr. Dundas accused, been subjected to a similar ordeal, Mr. Hastings would not have attempted, or at least not have continued, his more objectionable proceedings, in the face of certain inquiry, and perhaps punishment.

Memorable as the trial is for the space it will occupy in history and the excitement it produced in the nation, it is still more remarkable for the displays, or rather feats of genius in its conductors, unparalleled in this or in any other country; "shaking the walls that surrounded them," in the words of Mr. Erskine, "with anathemas of superhuman eloquence." It was in fact an æra in this art, a theme for the emulative oratory of Mr. Fox, Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Windham, and others, names that ennoble any page on which they are inscribed, who seemed pitted for victory as much over each other as over the accused.

But above them all, beyond dispute, stood Mr. Burke. He had devoted more attention to the subject, and in some degree, staked his reputation, that there were urgent grounds at least for inquiry; he was master of it at a time when few others knew or cared much about the matter;

he had more at stake in the result, in consequence of its being represented, however untruly, as his prosecution; the reproach and misrepresentation to which it gave rise, served not to damp, but rather to increase and sharpen the energy of his mind, while the occasion was suited to exhibit the vast extent of his knowledge, and the unrivalled variety of his powers. All these considerations, brought to bear on the point at issue, produced exertions without precedent or example; so extraordinary indeed, that, upon a low calculation, the whole of his speeches and writings connected with it, which at present occupy *seven* octavo volumes, would fill at the least *five* others if fully collected; and to give an intelligible outline of each, would of itself make no inconsiderable book. The principal, however, are to be found in his works already published, or which are soon to appear.

The greatest amazement, even to those who knew him best, was excited by the opening speech or speeches of the impeachment, which a modern writer, adverse to the impeachment itself, thus characterises in the general terms employed at the time:

"Never were the powers of that wonderful man displayed to such advantage as on this occasion; and he astonished even those who were most intimately acquainted with him by the vast extent of his reading, the variety of his resources, the minuteness of his information, and the lucid order in which he arranged the whole for the support of his object, and to make a deep impression on the minds of his hearers."

Nothing certainly in the way of fact, and nothing, perhaps, even in theatrical representation, ever exceeded the effects produced among the auditory, by the detail of the cruelties of Debi Sing, which he gave on the third day, from the reports of Mr. Paterson, who had been sent as commissioner to inquire into the circumstances. The whole statement* is appalling and heart-sickening in the extreme; a convulsive sensation of horror, affright, and smothered execration, pervaded all of the male part of his hearers, and audible sobbings and screams, attended with tears and faintings, the female. His own feelings were scarcely less overpowering; he dropped his head upon his hands, and for some minutes was unable to proceed; he recovered sufficiently to go on a little further; but, being obliged to cease from speaking twice at short intervals, His Royal Highness the Prince of Wales, to relieve him, at length moved the adjournment of the House. Alluding to the close of this day, the writer of the History of the Trial, says, "In this part of his speech Mr. Burke's descriptions were more vivid, more harrowing, and more horrific, than human utterance on either fact or fancy, perhaps, ever formed before. The agitation of most people was very apparent—Mrs. Sheridan was so overpowered that she fainted: several others were as powerfully affected."

"His powers," says a political adversary,† "were never more conspicuous than on that memorable day, on which he exposed the enormities of a subaltern agent of oriental despotism—the tortures inflicted by his orders, the flagrant injustice committed by his authority, the pollution that ensued in consequence of his sanction—when he painted agonising Nature, vibrating in horrid suspense between life and destruction—when he described, in the climax of crimes, 'death introduced into the very sources of life,' the bosoms of his auditors became convulsed with passion, and those of more delicate organs, or weaker frame, actually swooned away. Nay, after the storm of eloquence had spent its force, and his voice for the moment ceased, his features still expressed the energy of his feelings, his hand seemed to threaten punishment, and his brow to meditate vengeance."

---

* See Burke's Works, vol. xiii. p. 320—327; but the whole history of the monster Debi Sing, from p. 296 of the same volume, is a matter of deep interest. Mr. Hastings urged that he neither knew of nor countenanced his crimes; this probably was true; but the man's character was known to him before he was appointed to the situation, having been previously dismissed for gross mal-administration. What was more extraordinary and suspicious, though a rebellion had been produced by the cruelties, Mr. Paterson's Reports were treated as libels, and he returned to those who sent him as the accused, not the accuser, Debi Sing having contrived to turn the tables upon him.—Mr. Hastings's administration abounded in such anomalies.—Mr. Burke said that 40,000*l.* was the bribe paid for Debi Sing's appointment.

† Dr. Glennie.

The testimony of the accused party himself is, perhaps, the strongest ever borne to the powers of any orator of any country. "For half an hour," said Mr. Hastings, "I looked up at the orator in a reverie of wonder; and during that space I actually felt myself the most culpable man on earth:" adding, however, "But I recurred to my own bosom, and there found a consciousness that consoled me under all I heard and all I suffered."

Even the flinty temperament of the Chancellor, Lord Thurlow, was affected almost to producing *iron tears down Pluto's cheek;* and, judging by his expressions at the time, his faith in Mr. Hasting's purity seemed staggered. Addressing the peers some days afterwards, he concluded a handsome eulogium on the speech, by observing "that their Lordships all knew the effect upon the auditors, many of whom had not to that moment, and perhaps never would, recover from the shock it had occasioned."

The peroration was particularly fine; nothing more impressive or imposing is to be found in judicial oratory; and the effect of the whole was so powerful upon the auditory, that it was only after some time, and repeated efforts, that Mr. Fox could obtain a hearing. Of the physical as well as mental exertions of Mr. Burke, during the impeachment, some idea may be formed from the fact, that for weeks together he was constantly occupied between Westminster Hall and the House of Commons without quitting them, from nine o'clock in the morning till six or seven in the evening, and often to a later hour, at so late a period of the proceedings as 1793. It may be remarked, that the belief in Mr. Hastings's guilt was not more firmly entertained by Mr. Burke than it was by the late Mr. Charles Grant,* whose knowledge of India, and integrity, and abilities, were equally unquestioned, and to whom a statue has just been voted by the Company.

During the busiest sessions of the impeachment, 1786, 1787, and 1788, his attention was of course chiefly, though not solely, occupied by its details. The other measures in which he took part were in opposing, " with an almost overwhelming torrent of eloquence," in the language used at the time, the extension of power to the Governor General of India;† and the Declaratory Act, which indirectly gave ministry much of the power more openly assumed by the India bill, of opposition.

---

* Who died in 1823.

† What he recommended was a combination of three things—a government by law (not by will)—trial by jury—and publicity in every executive and judicial concern. Mr. Mill, who injures a good history here and there by peculiar opinions, and hasty conclusions, presumes most inconclusively against Mr. Burke's honesty or wisdom from this opposition; yet, in the same breath approves his remedies.

He also came forward on the constitution of the governments of Canada; in warmly approving, in the name of Opposition, the plan for the consolidation of the Customs; the treaty with the landgrave of Hesse and the renewal of our continential connections; the provision for a meritorious public servant, Sir John Skynner; in pushing forward the Slave Trade Abolition question now taken up by Mr. Wilberforce; and other less important matters.

The commercial treaty with France gave occasion to some bitterly sarcastic sparring between him and the Minister. The aggression being on the part of the former may perhaps be put down to the account of party spirit, for in a subsequent speech on the same topic, which Mr. Pitt notwithstanding their former encounter characterised as displaying a very singular share of ability, Mr. Burke differed from the other members of Opposition, in admitting that, though he questioned its policy, he had not the slightest fears of its injuring our own manufactures.

While speaking on this subject, and drawing a masterly comparison of the relative circumstances and capabilities of the two countries, which drew cheers from both sides of the House, he took occasion to reply ably, but satirically, to some observations made on a former occasion by a member, who, being one of nine said to be returned by a noble Earl, had thence acquired the ludicrous appellation of *nine pins*. Mr. Fox, entering the House at the moment of the cheer, inquired of Mr. Sheridan the cause of it. "Oh! nothing of consequence," replied the wit, "only Burke knocking down one of the *nine pins!*"

The tension of mind produced by these great public labours found occasional relaxation by short summer excursions into different parts of the kingdom, and in frequent correspondence with some old friends and very warm admirers among his countrymen. In 1785 he wrote to Dr. Beaufort, author of an able and well-known Memoir of a Map of Ireland, to procure for him a skeleton of the enormous species of moose deer, sometimes dug up in the bogs of that country, having an inclination, as he said, to see such a stately product of his native country placed in his hall.

In October 1786, induced by "a sudden fire-side thought," as he expressed it, he and his son proceeded thither, remaining not more than three weeks; he found time however to spend a day and a night at Ballitore, the last opportunity that offered of seeing these early friends on their own soil; and meeting with some of the old domestics of the establishment, remembered them perfectly, and behaved with his characteristic kindness and affability: an anecdote of this kind has been already related.

Part of the time was spent with Lord Charlemont, for whose private character he had so much regard as often to term him "one of the chief ornaments of Dublin." To this nobleman he was in the habit of giving letters of introduction to all his friends of consideration proceeding thither on business or curiosity, among whom, about this time, were Mr. (afterwards Sir Philip) Francis, Mr. Nevill, Mr. Shippen, an American traveller, and others. He also transmitted to his Lordship, about this period, a bust of the late Marquis of Rockingham, with whom he had been extremely intimate since 1752, when they became acquainted at Rome, on their travels: it was a present from the Marchioness. Soon afterward Mr. Burke, on being elected a member of the Royal Irish Academy, wrote him a letter of thanks, as president.

As specimens of that air of interest and elegance he was accustomed to throw over the common affair of a letter of introduction, two or three of them are subjoined ;—

"Gerrard-street, June 1, 1787.

"My dear Lord,

"I have an high respect for your Lordship of old, as I trust you know; and as I have the best wishes for my friend Mr. Francis, I am exceedingly desirous that he should have an opportunity of paying his compliments to the person in Ireland the most worthy the acquaintance of a man of sense and virtue. Mr. Francis has not been in Ireland since the days of his childhood, but he has been employed in a manner that does honour to the country that has given him birth. When he sees your Lordship, he will perceive that ancient morals have not yet deserted at least that part of the world which he revisits, and you will be glad to receive for a while a citizen that has only left his country to be the more extensively serviceable to mankind. May I beg your Lordship to present my most respectful and most affectionate compliments, and those of Mrs. Burke and my son, and all that are of our little family, to Lady Charlemont. I hope that Mr. Francis will bring back such an account of the health of your Lordship, and all yours, as may make us happy."

"Beaconsfield, July 19, 1787.

"My dear Lord,

"Mr. Francis called upon me in his way to his own house, charmed, as I expected he would be, with your character and conversation, and infinitely obliged by your reception of him. Give me leave to convey his thanks to you, and to add mine to them.—Every motive induces me to wish your house provided with all the ornaments that are worthy of it: the bust you desire is that which is most essential, and that in which you combine your taste, your friendship, and your principles. When I go to town, I shall see Mr. Nollekens, and hasten him as much as I can: there was no bust taken from Lord Rockingham during his life-time. This is made from a masque taken from his face after his death, and of couse must want that animation which I am afraid can never be given to it, without hazarding the ground-work of the features. Tassic has made a profile in his glass, which is I think the best likeness; I mean, uncoloured likeness, which exists. I will recommend it to Nollekens; perhaps he may make some advantage of it; though I have observed that artists seldom endeavour to profit of each other's works, though not in the exact line which they profess."

"My dear Lord,

"If I were to write all that is in my heart and head relative to you, and to your proceedings,* I should write volumes. At present I abstain from any subject but that which at this instant may give your Lordship occasion to remember me.

"My friend Mr. Shippen, of Pennsylvania, a very agreeable, sensible, and accomplished young man, will have the honour of delivering this to your Lordship. I flatter myself that you will think of him as I do; and, if you do, I have no doubt that he will find, under your Lordship's protection, every thing that he can expect (and he expects a great deal) from Ireland. He has been for some time upon his travels on the Continent of Europe; and, after this tour, he pays us the compliment of thinking that there are things and persons worth seeing in Ireland. For one person I am sure I can answer, and am not afraid of disappointing him, when I tell him, that in no country will he find a better pattern of elegance, good breeding, and virtue. I shall say nothing further to recommend my friend to one to whom a young gentleman, desirous of every sort of improvement, is, by that circumstance, fully recommended. America and we are no longer under the same Crown; but, if we are united by mutual good will, and reciprocal good offices, perhaps it may do almost as well. Mr. Shippen will give you no unfavourable specimen of the *new world*."

---

* On the Regency question.

His Lordship, in return, thought he could not do better for his particular friends bound to England, than to consign them to the care of one so celebrated, and so capable of affording instruction and amusement. Among these, about this time, was Mr. Hardy, destined to be his Lordship's biographer, who, although already known to Mr. Burke, seemed to feel the charm of his society and amiable qualities, with additional force, during this visit.

"He was," says that gentleman, "social, hospitable, of pleasing access, and most agreeably communicative. One of the most satisfactory days perhaps that I ever passed in my life, was going with him *tête-à-tête*, from London to Beaconsfield. He stopped at Uxbridge whilst his horses were feeding, and happening to meet some gentlemen of I know not what militia, who appeared to be perfect strangers to him, he entered into discourse with them at the gateway of the inn. His conversation at that moment completely exemplified what Johnson said of him, 'That you could not meet Burke under a shed without saying that he was an extraordinary man.'

"He was altogether uncommonly attractive and agreeable. Every object of the slightest notoriety as we passed along, whether of natural or local history, furnished him with abundant materials for conversation. The house, at Uxbridge, where the treaty was held during Charles the First's time; the beautiful and undulating grounds of Bulstrode, formerly the residence of Chancellor Jeffries; and Waller's tomb, in Beaconsfield church yard, which, before we went home, we visited, and whose character as a gentleman, a poet, and an orator, he shortly delineated, but with exquisite felicity of genius, altogether gave an uncommon interest to his eloquence; and although one-and-twenty years have elapsed since that day, I entertain the most vivid and pleasing recollection of it."

The most flattering testimony yet borne to the superiority of his public and private character, to his senatorial and literary talents, appeared in 1787, in the celebrated Latin preface to Bellendenus, by its celebrated author Dr. Parr; an offering certainly of no common value either in the terms in which it was expressed, or in the quarter from which it came: a characteristic tribute of unfeigned admiration from the most learned to the most eloquent man of the age. It is said that the Doctor has written an epitaph for him which, however, he has not yet made public.

His own taste in epitaph-writing was again put in requisition, by the completion, in August, 1788, of the splendid, and in this country unequalled, mausoleum to the memory of the Marquis of Rockingham, erected about a mile in front of Wentworth House, in Yorkshire, from which, as well as from the surrounding country, it forms a noble and interesting object 90 feet high. The interior of the base is a dome supported by 12 doric columns, with niches for the statues of the deceased Nobleman and his friends, among whom the distinguished writer of the following piece now takes his stand. The inscription, for force, precision, and fitness, has perhaps, like the mausoleum itself, no equal among the mortuary remains of the country :

"CHARLES, MARQUIS OF ROCKINGHAM.

"A statesman in whom constancy, fidelity, sincerity, and directness, were the sole instruments of his policy. His virtues were his arts. A clear, sound, unadulterated sense, not perplexed with intricate design, or disturbed by ungoverned passion, gave consistency, dignity, and effect, to all his measures. In Opposition he respected the principles of Government ; in Administration he provided for the liberties of the people He employed his moments of power in realising every thing which he had promised in a popular situation. This was the distinguishing mark of his conduct. After twenty-four years of service to the public, in a critical and trying time, he left no debt of just expectation unsatisfied.

"By his prudence and patience he brought together a party, which it was the great object of his labours to render permanent, not as an instrument of ambition, but as a living depository of principle.

"The virtues of his public and private life were not in him of different characters. It was the same feeling, benevolent, liberal mind that, in the internal relations of life, conciliates the unfeigned love of those who see men as they are, which made him an inflexible patriot. He was devoted to the cause of liberty, not because he was haughty and intractable, but because he was beneficent and humane.

"Let his successors, who from this house behold this monument, reflect that their conduct will make it their glory or their reproach. Let them be persuaded that similarity of manners, not proximity of blood, gives them an interest in this statue.

"Remember—Resemble—Persevere."

CHAPTER X.

Regency Question.—French Revolution.—Mr. Burke's opinions immediately formed.—His Correspondents.—Rupture with Mr. Sheridan.—Mr. Gerrard Hamilton.

TOWARD the end of October, 1788, the melancholy illness of the King withdrew public attention from all other subjects to the consequent proceedings in Parliament, in which Mr. Burke, who, it might be thought, had enough to do with the complicated labours of the impeachment, was destined to take an equally conspicuous part.

It is more than doubtful whether, at the commencement, this was quite congenial to his wishes. But the absence from England at first, and subsequent illness of Mr. Fox, threw the labouring oar upon him; and a sense of party honour or necessity, added to a firm conviction that the Heir Apparent was treated with injustice and disrespect, carried him forward to weild it with as much of energy as he had ever shown upon any occasion, but with less moderation of temper. Personal favour or aggrandisement he had no reason to expect; above six weeks of the emergency had elapsed when he pointedly declared in the House of Commons,—and the omission was then well known, though remedied soon afterward,—that he knew as little of the interior of Carlton House as of Buckingham House. This did not in the least abate the zeal of his exertions.

A detail of these, as they may be found in many other publications, it is not necessary to give here; they comprised nearly all that argument, wit, constitutional knowledge, and sarcastic ridicule, could urge, and were zealously continued in almost every debate on the subject for about two months. He contended for the *exclusive* right of the Prince of Wales to the Regency, in opposition to Mr. Pitt, who maintained that any other person, approved by Parliament, had an equal right to it; he strenuously resisted the two resolutions, that it was the express duty of the two Houses to provide a Regency, in case of interruption to the royal authority—and that they alone should determine on the means to give the royal assent to the bill constituting such a Regency.

The bill itself, with so many restrictions, he stigmatised as derogatory, injurious, suspicious, and insulting to the Prince, who was left to exercise all the invidious duties of government without any power to reward; he debated it, clause by clause, with unabated spirit till toward the end of February, when the happy recovery of the Sovereign put an end to further contention. The diligence with which Mr. Burke sought for information on all topics of interest may be conceived from what took place on the present occasion; that, besides ransacking our history for precedents or points of coincidence, he examined all the medical books treating of the disease, and visited several receptacles for persons so afflicted in order more thoroughly to trace its general progress and results, in addition to the examinations of the physicians. Nor was his pen less exercised upon this occasion than his other powers; one product of which is universally considered to be the celebrated answer of the Prince to the letter of Mr. Pitt, specifying the restrictions to be imposed upon the Regent, which, for dignity, and force of sentiment and of diction, has perhaps not many equals among state papers. Several minor pieces, such as the questions to the Lord Mayor, some speeches, letters, answers, and representations from exalted personages, are also attributed to him, a few of which breathe strong insinuations against the character and designs of Administration.

It has been said, in the general abuse poured upon him on this as on other great public questions, that he displayed a kind of triumph or at least indelicacy to the unhappy condition of His Majesty; a charge which his general humanity, and a fair interpretation of his expressions, such as every extempore debater needs and commonly solicits from his hearers, sufficiently refute.

It is well known indeed that he felt warmly; that he gave vent to his feelings too freely; that he committed upon this, as upon some other occasions, the fault of being too unreserved with the public at large, which, as experience has frequently proved, treats those statesmen with the least consideration who exhibit towards it the greatest candour and confidence; so that concealment and art, though considered as the vices of a statesman, are almost necessary to him to enjoy the favour of those whom he serves. In debate Mr. Burke's warmth was sufficiently punished on this question by unjust insinuations and by cries of *order!* which, being once pertinaciously urged in what he thought a frivolous or party spirit, drew from him the following observation in reply, having more than once expressed contempt at the use of this exclamation: "Order is an admirable thing, perfect in all its limbs, but unfortunately it squints, or can see only on that side which tells for itself. Delicacy also I have the utmost wish to preserve; but delicacy, though a being of perfect symmetry, like the former, is only a subsidiary virtue, and ought always to give way to truth, where the case is such that the truth is of infinitely more importance than the delicacy."

Politicians militant commonly make the greatest excuses for each other; and there were many apologies for Mr. Burke in the admitted manœuvring of Ministry so as to have jockeyed his friends out of the useful exercise of that power they were on the point of acquiring, had they even gained it; in the artful concealment of the design till the middle of December when it was ripe for execution; in the means made use of to instil ungenerous suspicions of her children into the mind of the Queen; in the anomalous principle of an elective regency in an hereditary monarchy; in the fraud and fiction as he strongly termed it of making the Great Seal, a thing of wax and copper, a substitute for a King when a living, lawful, intelligent heir was at hand; in the number and nature of the restrictions imposed; in the conflicting opinions of the physicians; and something in his own increasing irritability, the common offspring of increasing infirmity and age. No one understood the necessity for such allowances, or acted more fairly upon them, than Mr. Pitt; for though keenly sensitive to the sarcasms of his opponent, particularly when taunted with being a *competitor* for the Regency with the Prince, and to which he replied by an ungenerous accusation that Mr. Burke did not wish the King to recover, the occasion had no sooner ceased than it was forgotten on the part of both; both probably feeling that had their situations as to power been reversed, their conduct might not have been materially different.

The emergency to any minister was new and difficult; but the characteristic dexterity of Mr. Pitt, and the democratical view which the preservation or speedy resumption of power rendered it expedient for him to take of it, tickled the popular feeling into a decided approval of what he did; it was of course but natural that he should wish to retain his power; and it is equally certain that had he thought there was the most distant hope of retaining it under the Regent, the restrictions upon the latter would not have been imposed. The justice of the restrictions was therefore, to say the least, questionable; they cast a suspicion where no suspicion ought to have fallen; and a deep manœuvre to preserve a Ministry became the means not only of impeding the useful exercise of the power of the Crown for a time, but perhaps to weaken public respect for it, which, at any other time, or under other circumstances, Mr. Pitt himself would have most loudly reprobated.

Whatever be the opinion of his public measures, or the purity of his motives, his private conduct was manly; too unceremonious perhaps, too lofty, too unbending toward an illustrious personage to be consistent with perfect duty, though he disclaimed the slightest intentional disrespect. The Chancellor displayed more art and pliancy. Rough and knotted only when his official existence was not in danger, he on this occasion exhibited more of the willow than the oak in his composition, oscillating between the contending interests with a degree of elasticity of which he was previously not thought capable, and which, in the eyes of near observers, did not tend to exalt his character. Mr. Burke, informed of this, assailed him with several sarcasms, paticularly on hearing of a burst of the pathetic from him in the House of Lords in allusion to the afflicting condition of His Majesty:

"The theatrical tears then shed were not the tears of patriots for dying laws, but of Lords for their expiring places; the iron tears which flowed down Pluto's cheek rather resembled the dismal bubbling of the *Styx* than the gentle murmuring streams of *Aganippe:* in fact, they were tears for his Majesty's bread: and those who shed them would stick by the King's loaf as long as a single cut of it remained, while even a crust of it held together." Of the affectionate behaviour of the illustrious personage most interested, to both parents under invidious and trying circumstances, it is more difficult to speak, as the language of truth might be mistaken for impertinent praise. But when eulogy can have no aim and no reward, it will be adduced as an example to children in every condition of life.

During the progress of this business, the correspondence of Mr. Burke with Lord Charlemont, who took the lead in the Irish House of Lords, and formed one of the deputation bearing its Address to the Prince, was frequent and confidential; he being indeed the only channel used for communication of the public opinion of Ireland, between that nobleman and his Royal Highness. Of the latter, with whom he had several interviews, he speaks highly in a letter to his Lordship of April 4th, 1789:

"My dearest Lord,

"You do no more than strict justice in allowing the sincerity of my attachment to you, and my readiness on all occasions to óbey your commands. My affections are concerned in your thinking so, and my pride in having it believed by as many as know me.

"After I had received your letter of the 24th of March I lost no time in attending the P——. I cannot say that I executed your Lordship's commission literally: I thought it better to let you speak for yourself. To have done otherwise would not have been to do justice to the P., to your Lordship, or even to the person charged with your commission. There never was any thing conceived more justly, or expressed with more elegance, than what you have said of his R. H. I did not think it right to spoil so just and so handsome a compliment, by giving it in any other words than your own. I risked more; and, without your authority, put the letter into his hands. The P. was much pleased, and I think affected. The account your Lordship has given of the state of politics in Ireland, was certainly not what we could have wished, and indeed expected. It was, however, a relief to his R. H. as he found things much better than, from other accounts, he had conceived them.

"I never had the least idea that the Opposition in Ireland could continue against the presiding Administration here, however some individuals might be on principle adverse to it. I am charmed with what I have heard of the Duke of Leinster. I am happy to find him add a character of firmness to the rest of his truly amiable and respectable qualities. Ponsonby* then is, it seems, the Proto-Martyr. I never saw him until the time of your embassy; but I am not mistaken in the opinion I formed of him, on our first conversation, as a manly, decided character, with a right conformation of mind, and a clear and vigorous understanding. The world will see what is got by leaving a provoked, a powerful enemy; and how well faith is kept by those, whose situation is obtained by their infidelity, one would have thought that personal experience was not necessary for teaching that lesson. As to what you have said of the care to be taken of the Martyrs to their duty, that is a thing of course, in case an opportunity occurs. They would not be injured so much as the leaders would be eternally disgraced, if they were not made their first objects. It would be a shame, indeed, if those who surrender should profit more by the generosity of their enemies than those who hold out to the last biscuit might by the justice and gratitude of their friends. Here we seem to have forgot all serious business.

---

* Afterwards Lord Ponsonby; dismissed, after the Regency question, from the office of Post-Master General.

"I have a thousand things to say to your Lordship on the part of the P. with regard to your principles, your liberality of sentiment, the goodness of your heart, and the politeness of your manners. I think him a judge of these things, and I see that he knows the value of a compliment from one, who has his civility for every body, but the expression of his approbation for very few."*

It is remarkable that though every one else thought the exertions of Mr. Burke on this question very laborious, he did not seem to have the same opinion of them himself. "My time of life," said he, writing to the same Nobleman, July 10th, on this and other matters, "the length of my service, and the temper of the public, rendered it very unfit for me to exert myself in the common routine of Opposition." Yet he had exerted himself on several topics, particularly on the business of the impeachment, and the abolition of the Slave Trade, recommending that Mr. Wilberforce's propositions be considered immediately, and saying that the system itself was one of robbery.

With Mr. Fox, though without expressly naming him, he was evidently dissatisfied on the Regency question, and also with others of his coadjutors; alluding to these, and to continued ill success, notwithstanding his extraordinary exertions, he has the following remarks in another passage of the same letter: "Perpetual failure, even though nothing in that failure can be fixed on the improper choice of objects, or the injudicious choice of means, will detract every day more and more from a man's credit, until he ends without success and without reputation. In fact, a constant pursuit even of the best objects, *without adequate instruments*, detracts something from the opinion of a man's judgment. This I think may be, in part, the cause of the inactivity of others of our friends, who are in the vigour of life, and in possession of a great degree of lead and authority. * * *

---

* Hardy's Life of Lord Charlemont.

"My particular province has been the East Indies. We have rest, or something like it, for the present; but depend upon it I shall persevere to the end, and shall not add myself to the number of those bad examples, in which delinquents have wearied out the constancy of the prosecutors. We may not go through all the charges; I fear it will be out of our power to do this; but we shall give a specimen of each great head of criminality, and then call for judgment. So far as to a general view of my sole share of business. As to the politics of Ireland, as I see nothing in them very pleasant, I do not wish to revive in your mind what your best philosophy is required to make tolerable. Enjoy your Marino,* and your amiable and excellent family. These are comfortable sanctuaries, when more extensive views of society are gloomy and unpleasant and unsafe."

The obloquy cast on Opposition, especially on Mr. Burke, in every form of popular literary missile, pamphlets, newspapers, epigrams, caricatures, and squibs in all forms of publication, nearly equalled the abuse he experienced on the impeachment.

At the close of this session a period of public tranquillity seemed at hand. No prominent object of interest was before the public. The late contest had been set at rest by the recovery of the King. The impeachment had lost much of its hold on general curiosity; and the preceding letter indicated a damp on the mind of the writer of being doomed to some degree of political inaction, a state which, though he sometimes appeared in his letters to covet, was in fact wholly alien to his temperament and habits; for these, however occasionally delighted with retirement, were, in spirit and by practice, of the most active description.

---

* A beautiful villa near Dublin, commanding the whole sweep of the bay, and much of the surrounding country.

But a week had not elapsed after it was written, when the storming of the Bastille in Paris, the defection of the army, the lawless massacres of the mob, the flight of many of the nobility and part of the royal family, and the entire dissolution of the powers of government, seemed the consummation by open outrage of the moral disorders which for two or three years had pervaded a neighbouring kingdom.

France, in the eyes of an Englishman, had for centuries presented a striking contrast to his own country, especially in one leading point. Long her equal in science, in the arts, in letters, in war, abounding in men of great genius and attainments, and in clear and extended views, and pre-eminent in all the amenities of polished life, she was yet but a savage in the appreciation of freedom. She had acquired all things but that alone which is the most valuable of all, and which most ennobles man in his own opinion;—the light of liberty was the only light which had not shone upon her; the spirit to acquire national freedom was the only spirit in which she was deficient. Little desirous of amending the institutions of despotism, she had continued quietly to submit for nearly two centuries after England had thrown them completely off; as if example itself in this most contagious of all feelings and occurring even at her doors, was fated to fall dead to the ground for any thing that concerned her. A portion of this indifference arose from overweening vanity. Conceited beyond all nations, she despised whatever was not her own ; wrapped up in the splendours of military glory and absolute monarchy, she not only could not understand the advantage of our more popular form of government, but contemned it as inefficient to her favourite purposes of war and aggrandisement. With characteristic self-complacency, some of her statesmen and all her courtiers pronounced it as suited only to a people whose national spirit and manners they were pleased to say, partook equally of barbarity. Occasional consciousness of political degradation had indeed been exhibited by many of her eminent men during the preceding fifty years, but it was partial and soon forgotten. The wheels of government rolled on ; clogged by the filth which an absolute monarchy has a natural tendency to engender, but still in motion, and might have continued still to move, had not financial difficulties, soon after the close of the American war, precipitated an event for which the people in power were wholly unprepared.

The *Notables*, a selection from the higher order of each class of persons in the kingdom, were at length assembled, followed by the convocation of the States General, when, by very ordinary efforts of honesty and common sense, France might have acquired for herself all that could be desired in freedom and security. But the mass of people were ignorant ; the nobility and clergy bigoted to invidious privileges and exemptions ; the ties of religion loosened in the higher and middling classes, by a most extensive and extraordinary conspiracy of Atheists and Deists ; the state of morals, among the same classes, scandalously licentious ; and when the moment of difficulty came, the King himself—a Lot in the midst of Gomorrah—was compelled to encounter a most alarming state of things surrounded by few good men, and scarcely a single wise one.

The scenes that ensued need not be retraced; they are painful to contemplate, and two or three centuries hence will scarcely be believed. But the deliberative body, the assembled *virtue*, and *property*, and *talent* of the nation, presented the most fearful, as well as the most curious spectacle of all. It is difficult even now to tell whether knavery or folly predominated most in its proceedings. There were in it some clever, and many good men; but, outnumbered by the designing, the unprincipled, the ignorant; by dreamers, and by speculative philosophers ignorant of first elements of political science, who, in attempting to carry their reveries into effect, converted anarchy into a species of system.

They took a constitution in hand, as a savage would a looking glass, or a boy a Chinese puzzle; it must be pulled to pieces to discover the hidden charm within. All the balances of the State were therefore overturned, the rights of property infringed, distinctions as old as the foundation of the kingdom abrogated. There was no attempt made to retain the shattered elements of the State which were in themselves good—no wise design, as Lord Bacon expresses it, to weed, to prune, and to graft, rather than to plough up and plant all afresh—but a seeming desire to enjoy a species of moral chaos, to revel in the luxury of inextricable confusion; and so general was the spirit, that many of the nobility and clergy whose interests and very existence were at stake by the schemes in agitation, became the most forward instruments of their own destruction; some from a love for popularity, but the majority from utter want of foresight as to consequences.

Among the Members of the Assembly, the presumed wisdom of the nation, might be seen (very soon afterwards at least) that theoretical perfection of representation so much admired by one class of politicians practically put to the test. Every class of society, almost to the offal, was ransacked for deputies. The fruits were such as might be expected; men without wisdom, without dignity, without property, without experience or consistency of conduct, whose meetings had little of the character of deliberation, and whose deeds, as the revolution advanced, but for their atrocity, would have been as laughable for folly as they were defective in every quality of grave consideration.

A curious inquirer might trace among many of its members, and among the chief agents who worked their way by their follies or vices into the service of the State during the confusion, a remarkable animosity in individuals toward their former avocations or attachments.

Here were to be seen noblemen denouncing the order of nobility; ministers of a despotic monarchy calling for a republic; courtiers cutting off the King's head; priests voting religion a nuisance; lawyers overturning all semblance of law or justice; philosophers admitting of no argument but the guillotine; poets chaunting the necessity for more blood; painters coolly catching the finishing touches of their art in the dying struggles of the scaffold; for all these facts literally occurred.—Below these again, and still more active in the work of *purification*, were tradesmen—butchers, brewers, bakers, and others —busily occupied in thinning the mouths they had contributed to feed; and school-masters, musicians, players, dancing-masters, exterminating those orders of society, who had previously formed their chief or only means of support.

The people were not unworthy of such representatives, and such authorities. Paris, and much of the country, became transformed into a den of uncaged maniacs, acting the most wild and horrible extravagances such as no country barbarous or civilised ever before offered, beyond even the murderous jollities of Ashantee. Were not the facts notorious, it would be difficult to believe that human nature had been so bad;—the rights of man, ostentatiouly proclaimed, and every instant atrociously violated; religion defamed and abolished, to make way for the goddess of reason; morality derided; public massacres sanctioned; anarchy legalised; quarter to English prisoners of war, disallowed by the public vote of the Deputies of the nation; proscription and bloodshed decreed to be the duty, almost the recreation, of the execrable ruffians in power; even the dead torn from their graves to undergo the most revolting indignities. All the ties that bind men together seemed to be dissolved. Obligations had no longer power to conciliate, or gratitude to bind the dependant to his benefactor; brother warred with brother; the son with his father, wherever there appeared the least hesitation in dooming to destruction all who possessed wealth, rank, or principle. For about five years all Europe gazed with affright and astonishment at this spectacle, which, embodying the crimes and barbarities of the world within the compass of a single state, rendered a government detestible, a people infamous, and liberty thus abused the direst of all curses.

In England, the first movements of the Revolution were hailed as the regeneration of a large portion of the human race. Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt tendered it their tribute of admiration. Mr. Burke alone was more cautious or more penetrating. He professed to admire the principle; but either from that uncommon sagacity he had ever displayed on great national questions, from his greater age and consequent experience, from a greater knowledge of mankind, or from a clearer insight into the French character, he entertained from the first some extraordinary misgivings as to its mode of operation and result.

Few things in political history are more interesting than to trace the first symptoms of this hesitation to approve, what other and even great men thought it almost their duty, instantly, and by acclamation, to admire. Among his first sentiments on this topic committed to paper, if not the very first, was a letter to Lord Charlemont, dated 9th of August, 1789, about three weeks after the storming of the Bastille, in which he opens his mind without reserve:

"As to us here, our thoughts of every thing at home are suspended by our astonishment at the wonderful spectacle which is exhibited in a neighbouring and rival country. What spectators, and what actors! England gazing with astonishment at a French struggle for liberty, and not knowing whether to blame or to applaud.

"The thing, indeed, though I thought I saw something like it in progress for several years, has still somewhat in it paradoxical and mysterious. The spirit it is impossible not to admire; but the old Parisian ferocity has broken out in a shocking manner. It is true, that this may be no more than a sudden explosion; if so, no indication can be taken from it; but if it should be *character*, rather than accident, then that people are not fit for liberty, and must have a strong hand, like that of their former masters, to coerce them.

"Men must have a certain fund of natural moderation to qualify them for freedom, else it becomes noxious to themselves, and a perfect nuisance to every body else. What will be the event, it is hard, I think, still to say.

To form a solid constitution requires wisdom as well as spirit; and whether the French have wise heads among them, or if they possess such, whether they have authority equal to their wisdom, is yet to be seen. In the mean time the progress of this whole affair is one of the most curious matters of speculation that ever was exhibited."

Nothing can be more unambiguous and unreserved, or more consistent with the active part he afterwards took, than this avowal made in the confidence of friendship—that the spirit to aim at liberty was praiseworthy, but that his ultimate approval must depend upon the manner in which that desire should be carried into effect. The apprehensions which overshadowed his mind are obvious in this letter, and similar sentiments were communicated both verbally and in writing, to other friends. His judgment might be said (without a figure) to be suspended over it like the sword of Damocles, and with almost equal power to destroy.

In the mean time, with his accustomed diligence, no means were left untried of procuring information, desiring all his acquaintance in Paris, and all who were going thither, to transmit him whatever they could collect, whether of a private nature, or the more public documents which might appear on either side. Among his correspondents at this moment, besides M. Dupont and other natives of distinction, of the reasonable class of well-wishers to freedom, were others of a different stamp; Mr. Christie, the noted Thomas Paine, and the equally notorious Baron (otherwise Anacharsis) Clootz; the two latter men more especially, who, though the very fanatics of revolution and republicanism, were fated to supply, unintentionally on their part, some of the materials which Mr. Burke, with equal speed and dexterity, sharpened into their most powerful antidotes.

To another correspondent, M. de Menonville, a relation of the Baron de Menou and a member of the National Assembly, who requested his opinion of their affairs towards the end of September, 1789, he wrote early in the following month, plainly exhibiting the gradual development of his opinions and apprehensions, as events took a more decided turn:

"As you are pleased to think that your splendid flame of liberty was first lighted up at my faint and glimmering taper, you have a right to call upon me for my sentiments on whatever relates to that subject. * * * *

"You may easily believe that I have had my eyes turned with great curiosity, and no small concernment, to the astonishing scene now displayed in France. It has certainly given rise in my mind to many reflections, and to some emotions. These are natural and unavoidable; but it would ill become me to be too ready in forming a positive opinion upon matters transacted in a country, with the correct political map of which I must be very imperfectly acquainted. Things, indeed, have already happened so much beyond the scope of all speculation, that persons of infinitely more sagacity than I have, ought to be ashamed of any thing like confidence in reasoning upon the operation of any principle, or the effect of any measure. It would become me least of all to be so confident, who ought at my time of life to have well learned the important lesson of self-distrust—a lesson of no small value in company with the best information—but which alone can make any sort of amends for our not having learned other lessons so well as it was our business to have learned them. * * * *

"You hope, Sir, that I think the French deserving of liberty. I certainly do. I certainly think that all men who desire it deserve it. It is not the reward of our merit, or the acquisition of our industry. It is our inheritance. It is the birth-right of our species. We cannot forfeit our right to it, but by what forfeits our title to the privileges of our kind, *I mean the abuse or oblivion of our national faculties; and a ferocious indocility, which makes us prompt to wrong and violence, destroys our social nature, and transforms us into something little better than a description of wild beasts.* To men so degraded a state of strong constraint is a sort of necessary substitute for freedom; since, bad it is, it may deliver them in some measure from the worst of all slavery, that is, the despotism of their own blind and brutal passions. You have kindly said that you began to love freedom from your intercourse with me. Permit me then to continue our conversation, and to tell you what the freedom is that I love. It is not solitary, unconnected, individual, selfish liberty. It is social freedom. *It is that state of things in which the liberty of no man, and no body of men, is in a condition to trespass on the liberty of any person, or any description of persons, in society.* This kind of liberty is, indeed, but another name for justice, ascertained by wise laws, and secured by well constructed institutions. I am sure that liberty so incorporated, and in a manner identified with justice, must be infinitely dear to every man who is capable of conceiving what it is. But whenever a separation is made between liberty and justice, neither is, in my opinion, safe. I do not believe that men ever did submit, certain I am that they never ought to have submitted, to the arbitrary pleasure of one man, but under circumstances, in which the arbitrary pleasure of many persons in the community pressed with an intolerable hardship upon the just and equal rights of their fellows. Such a choice might be made as among evils. The moment *will* is set above reason and justice in any community, a great question may arise in sober minds, in what part or portion of the community that dangerous dominion of *will* may be least mischievously placed. * * * *

"I have nothing to check my wishes towards the establishment of a solid and rational scheme of liberty in France. On the subject of the relative power of nations I may have prejudices; but I envy internal freedom, security, and good order, to none. When, therefore, I shall learn that in France the citizen, by whatever description he is qualified, is in a perfect state of legal security, with regard to his life, to his property, to the uncontrolled disposal of his person, to the free use of his industry and his faculties;—when I hear that he is protected in the beneficial enjoyment of the estates to which, by the course of settled law, he was born, or is provided with a fair compensation for them; that he is maintained in the full fruition of the advantages belonging to the state and condition of life in which he had lawfully engaged himself, or is supplied with an equitable equivalent;—when I am assured, that a simple citizen may decently express his sentiments upon public affairs, without hazard to his life or liberty, even though against a predominant and fashionable opinion;—when I know all this of France, I shall be as well pleased as every one must be, who has not forgot the general communion of mankind, nor lost his natural sympathy in local and accidental connexions."

This paper, though not published by one of Mr. Burke's friends, is in itself too masterly and too characteristic, to be mistaken for the work of any other writer of the age; and the sentiments surely are such, as the most ardent lover of liberty cannot find fault with. In a second communication to the same correspondent, he becomes more explicit as the scene itself becomes changed:

"As for me, I have read, and with some attention, the authorised or rather equally authentic documents on this subject; from the first instructions to the representative of the several orders, down to this time. What else I have read has been for the greater part on the side of those who have a considerable share in the formation and conduct of public measures. A great many of the most decisive events, I conceive, are not disputed as facts, though, as usual, there is some dispute about their causes and their tendencies. On comparing the whole of fact, of public document, and of what can be discerned of the general temper of the French people, I perfectly agree with you that there is very little likelihood of the old government's regaining its former authority. Were the King to escape from his palace, where he is now, in reality, a prisoner with his wife and almost his whole family, to what place could he fly? Every town in France is a Paris. I see no way by which a second revolution can be accomplished. The only chance seems to consist in the extreme instability of every species of power, and the uncertainty of every kind of speculation. In this I agree with you; in most other particulars I can by no means go so far. That a police is established in Paris, I can readily believe. They have an army, as I hear, of 6000 men. * * * They have the means of preserving quiet; and since they have completely attained their ends, they must have the disposition. A total anarchy is a self-destructive thing. *But if the same ends should hereafter require the same course, which have been already pursued, there is no doubt but the same ferocious delight in murder, and the same savage cruelty, will be again renewed.* If any of those horrid deeds, which surely have not been misrepresented to us, were the acts of the rulers, what are we to think of an armed people under such rulers? Or if (which possibly may be the case) there is in reality and substance no ruler, and that the chiefs are driven before the people, rather than lead them; and if the armed corps are composed of men, who have no fixed principle of obedience, and are embodied only by the prevalence of some general inclination; who can repute himself safe among a people so furious and so senseless? * * *

"In all appearance, the new system is a most bungling and unworkmanlike performance. I confess I see no principle of coherence, co-operation, or just subordination of parts in this whole project, nor any the least aptitude to the conditions and wants of the state to which it is applied, nor any thing well imagined for the formation, provision, or direction of a common force. The direct contrary appears to me. * * * Man is a gregarious animal. He will by degrees provide some convenience suitable to this his natural disposition; and this strange thing (the system adopted by the National Assembly) may some time or other assume a more habitable form. The fish will at length make a shell which will fit him. I beg pardon for dwelling so long, and employing so much thought upon a subject, on which its contrivers have evidently employed so little. I cannot think with you that the assembly have done much. They have, indeed, *undone* a great deal; and so completely broken up their country as a State, that I assure you there are few here such *antigallicans* as not to feel some pity on the deplorable view of the wreck of France. I confess to you, that till I saw it, I could not conceive that any men in public could have shown so little mercy to their country.

"You say, my dear sir, they read Montesquieu—I believe not.—If they do, they do not understand him. He is often obscure, sometimes misled by system; but on the whole, a learned and ingenious writer, and sometimes a most profound thinker. Sure it is, that they have not followed him in any one thing they have done. Had he lived at this time, he would certainly be among the fugitives from France. With regard to the other writers you speak of, I do believe the directors of the present system to be influenced by them. Such masters! such scholars! Who ever dreamt of Voltaire and Rousseau as legislators? The first has the merit of writing agreeably; and nobody has ever united blasphemy and obscenity so happily together. The other was not a little deranged in his intellects, to my almost certain knowledge. But he saw things in bold and uncommon lights, and he was very eloquent.—But as to the rest, I have read long since the *Contrat Social.* It has left very few traces upon my mind. I thought it a performance of little or no merit; and little did I conceive that it could ever make revolutions, and give law to nations. But so it is. I see some people here are willing that we should become their scholars too, and reform our State on the French model. They have begun; and it is high time for those who wish to preserve *morem majorum* to look about them."

At the moment this was written, few indeed could agree in opinion with the sagacious writer, of the evils attendant on the Revolution. Yet after every allowance for the generous feelings of the moment, all considerate men must have been convinced, that the utter subversion of every thing established in a State can never, under any circumstances, be justifiable or wise. Even great changes in the supreme authorities, though, perhaps, sometimes necessary, are always fearfully dangerous. They must not be adopted but in the last extremity, and then managed only by the most delicate and experienced hands. Earthquakes and hurricanes possibly produce good, but few sober men like to be within the sphere of their operation. It is just so with revolutions. The good is problematical. The way to it at least is through a bog of confusion and evil, a scene too often of moral desolation—of over-turned laws, property, and connexions—in which wantonly to throw down every ancient land-mark is wilfully to wander out of the road, and to plunge into inextricable difficulties which destroy every hope of advantage from the changes in view. Such, however, was the effect of example, that many persons in England, disregarding the blessings of the practical freedom they enjoyed, professed not only to admire the speculative reveries of France, but a wish to put some of the principal into practice. The delusion was wide and deep-rooted,—more general, indeed, than it is now easy to believe; nor did it, with a few even of our greatest men, speedily pass away.

Mr. Burke, whose indignation received a new impulse, from what he termed 'this gross infatuation,' 'this abstract folly and practical wickedness,' and whose worst anticipations were realised by every arrival from France, expressed considerable surprise when told that Mr. Fox, with whom there had been some cessation of confidential intercourse, entertained very different opinions. He had, in consequence, almost come to the resolution not voluntarily to obtrude his sentiments on the subject in Parliament; not at least till compelled by a sense of duty paramount to all private considerations. Such an opportunity soon arrived.

In two debates on the army estimates (5th and 9th of February, 1790) Mr. Fox not only eulogized the Revolution generally, but was imprudent enough to specify some points of particular admiration—among others the defection of the French military from their officers and government; being, in fact, tacit connivance at the worst excesses of the populace. Colonel Phipps and others reprobated these sentiments loudly. Mr. Burke, on the second occasion expressing the highest admiration for the talents of his honourable friend, and the consequent danger to our own country of giving the sanction of his name to such doctrines, entered into an examination of the state of France, the principles, proceedings, and tendencies of the Revolution; condemning in bitter terms the incurable ignorance of the leaders, their folly, injustice, and wickedness, their pedantic theories, their abuse of elementary principles; and contrasted it with the English Revolution; in which, though some were fond of comparing them, he could find not a single point of resemblance. He hated the old despotism of France, and still more he hated the new: it was a plundering, ferocious, bloody, tyrannical democracy, without a single virtue to redeem its crimes, and so far from being, as his honourable friend had inadvertently said, worthy of imitation, he would spend his last breath and the last drop of his blood—he would quit his best friends, and join his worst enemies, to oppose the least tittle of such a spirit, or such an example in England.

This speech, which contained no compliment to administration, but on the contrary displayed an adverse spirit, was nevertheless received by them and by a great majority of the House with loud applause. Mr. Pitt was among the most conspicuous; he had incautiously been led to express some opinion in favour of the struggle then going on, but alarmed at its further progress or aspect, now appeared to wheel round to concur in the sentiments of Mr. Burke. No matter, he said, how they had differed on former points of policy, he felt for him on that occasion the highest gratitude and reverence, and not only the present generation but the latest posterity would revere his name, for the decided part he had that day taken.

The reply of Mr. Fox was mild and conciliatory. He had ever, and did then, entertain the highest veneration for the judgment of his honourable friend; by him he had been instructed more than by all other men and books put together; by him he had been taught to love our constitution; from him he had acquired all his political knowledge; "his speech on that day, some arguments and observations excepted, was one of the wisest and most brilliant flights of oratory ever delivered in that House," but, with all these admissions, his opinions on the subject in question continued unshaken.

A rejoinder from Mr. Burke expressed an equally complimentary and conciliatory spirit; and the subject, tender as it evidently was, would have dropped, at least for the present without further consequences, had not the zeal of Mr. Sheridan, in support of the new opinions, urged him on to charge his old political associate as a deserter from his former principles—as an assailant of the basis of freedom itself—as the advocate and apologist of despotism—and the libeller of men struggling in the most glorious of all causes. The reply to these unmeasured censures was calm, but decided. Such terms, Mr. Burke said, might have been spared, if for nothing more than as a sacrifice to the ghost of departed friendship; they were but a repetition of what was said by the reforming clubs and societies with which the honourable gentleman had lately become entangled, and for whose applause he had chosen to sacrifice his friend; though he might in time find that it was not worth the price at which it was purchased. Henceforward, he added, they were separated in politics for ever.

This schism threatened such serious consequences to the interests of the party, that attempts were instantly made, and repeated two days afterwards, to heal it by mutual explanation, in presence of some of the chief Members at Burlington House; they met at ten o'clock at night, and debated the matter until three next morning, separating then, as they met, with irreconcileable differences of opinion. The display of talents on both sides is said to have been remarkable. Mr. Burke was cool, expressing the most amicable sentiments, and the impression as to services, powers, and opinions, proved so much in his favour from those present, that Mr. Sheridan took offence, and for the remainder of this session and the beginning of the next, ceased from his usual active support in Parliament.

Some personal dislike prevailed between these distinguished men ever afterwards, nor were they perhaps very cordial before. Mr. Burke, who always complimented his talents, did not for many reasons place equal confidence in his general conduct or principles, one cause for which was his alleged breach of political faith in intriguing for one of the highest Cabinet situations in the new arrangements consequent on the settling of the Regency question, to the exclusion of older and higher claimants. He suspected also that he was the cause of Mr. Fox withdrawing from him his political confidence. The wit, on the other hand, as he rose high in the private favour of an illustrious personage, and in the esteem of his party, felt some impatience of the preponderance of Mr. Burke; he possessed little of the humility of the latter in the estimate of his own importance; with much less of talent he had more than his ambition; and forgetful of the disciplined subordination of the old Whig school, aimed at vaulting at once to the head of the connexion over superior talents and longer services, though without private weight himself, without any strong hold on public confidence, and as was generally believed, without the diligence necessary to conduct public business. After their disagreement, it was remarked that he always sat silent in private company, when Mr. Burke was a theme of praise with every one else; in Parliament he spoke of him more than once, "as one for whose talents and personal virtue he entertained the highest esteem, veneration, and regard;" a compliment which did not prevent him from making frequent, pointed, and personal attacks on the object of it, but which Mr. Burke rarely deigned to regard. To his counsels, also, it has always been said, that the subsequent quarrel of the former with Mr. Fox was owing.

The next avowed difference of opinion with Opposition was on the repeal of the Corporation and Test Acts, moved by Mr. Fox on the 2d of March. Mr. Burke declared, that had it been brought forward ten years sooner, he would have conceived himself bound to vote in the affirmative; but such doubts had since arisen in his mind, that when the same question was moved by Mr. Beaufoy in 1787 and 1789, unwilling to vote against it, yet not satisfied that he was right in voting for it, he had withdrawn from the House without voting at all.

At present, he thought the repeal more particularly inexpedient—there was a wild spirit of innovation abroad, which required to be checked—the avowed leaders of the dissenters, alluding to Drs. Price, Priestley, Kippis, Towers, and others—had in their speeches, writings, resolutions, and even sermons, given countenance not only to the very questionable spirit of the day, but one or two of them had openly threatened a direct attack on the Church Establishment. Such he believed was not the intention of the respectable body with whom those persons were connected; he had ever entertained for that body the highest esteem and respect; but while they permitted such persons to take the lead in their affairs, their pretensions would be received with suspicion; and after all, as some test, he believed, would be required by the country, if these acts were repealed, he had brought the draught of one in his pocket;—this, however, he did not produce, neither did he remain to give his vote. Whatever was the cause, whether from the effect of his speech, the exertions of Mr. Pitt, or the general alarm in the country, this question, which in the preceding session received a faint negative from no more than 20, was now smothered by a majority of 189.

The other chief subjects of the session in which he took part, were in opposing a motion for Parliamentary Reform by Mr. Flood (Mr. Fox honestly confessing, that though he thought such a measure necessary, the people did not seem to be of the same opinion;)—in supporting the address on the quarrel with Spain;—and on matters connected with the impeachment.

A proposition, through the medium of some common friends, was made to Mr. Burke about this period, by his former acquaintance Gerrard Hamilton, to renew that intimacy which had so long suffered estrangement, but this offer he declined. He had told Mr. Flood at the time, there was "an eternal separation" between them,—that "he would not keep a memorial of such a person about him," and possibly the recollection of some random sarcasms which Hamilton, though he always did full justice to his uncommon powers, had occasionally let off against his party and himself, might have tended to make him keep his word. The reply made to the communication was, that without entertaining the slightest resentful or unfriendly feeling toward Mr. Hamilton, there were several circumstances in their connexion and separation, particularly the obloquy thrown upon his character without cause, which would prevent his enjoying the same pleasure as formerly in his society. It is said, that had Lord Temple ever become Minister, it was his intention to make Mr. Hamilton his Chancellor of the Exchequer; and it must ever be considered an enigma, that any one looking to such a post, should not have made himself of more importance in Parliament than he did by frequently speaking. No explanation has ever been given of his taciturnity, except the illiberal one, that he already enjoyed in a rich sinecure all the substantial return he could expect for much talking.

CHAPTER XI.

Publication of Reflections on the Revolution in France.—Thomas Paine.—Letter to a Member of the National Assembly.—Rupture with Mr. Fox.—Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs.—Jury Bill of 1791. *—Anecdotes.*

From the moment of the rupture with Mr. Sheridan, Mr. Burke, perceiving that his opinions on the French Revolution were misrepresented, and willing also to state them more fully and forcibly to the world, as well as to enable the reflecting part of it to think more justly, as he believed, of the event itself, decided to call in the aid of the press.

This task was begun and carried on during the summer with his wonted ardour and disregard of labour, and alluding to the anxious emotions to which it gave rise, says, in a letter to Lord Charlemont, of the 25th May, "I have been at once much occupied and much agitated with my employment." The elements of the work, however, had been for some months floating in his mind, and in fact no inconsiderable portion of it, or at least matter nearly similar, already in various forms committed to paper. These were collected, re-written, enlarged, amended, and re modelled to the form in which he had determined to publish, that of a letter to the French gentleman who had before consulted him on the subject; the whole was polished with extraordinary care, more than a dozen of proofs being worked off and destroyed before he could please himself; it was set off with every attraction of the highest style of eloquence of which the English language is susceptible; it was impressed on the judgment by acute reasoning, by great penetration into the motives of human action, by maxims of the most sound and practical wisdom: nothing, indeed, which his genius, his knowledge, or his observation could supply, was omitted to give popularity to the "Reflections on the Revolution in France."

In the beginning of November, 1790, this celebrated work made its appearance, and a French translation, by his friend M. Dupont,* quickly spread its reputation over all Europe. The publication proved one of the remarkable events of the year, perhaps of the century; for it may be doubted whether any previous production ever excited so much attention, so much discussion, so much praise, so much animadversion, and ultimately, among the great majority of persons, such general conviction, having fully succeeded in turning the stream of public opinion to the direction he wished, from the channel in which it had hitherto flowed. The circulation of the book corresponded with its fame; about 30,000 copies were sold when there was not a third of the demand for books of any kind that there is at present—a greater sale, it is said, than that of any preceding work whatever of the same price. The interest excited by it did not cease with the moment; for it was sought after by persons little prone to political discussion for the wisdom of the lessons it taught; by many for its literary beauties; by many in order to retrace the outline of fearful and extraordinary events there in great measure foretold; and it will ever be a source of deep interest to the practical statesman, and of attention to the man of taste and genius.

---

* A letter to this gentleman from Mr. Burke appeared soon afterwards in the newspapers, on the character of Henry IV. of France.

The testimonies of applause and admiration which flowed in upon the writer from every quarter, evinced his power over the question at issue; for few authors, perhaps none, were ever before so complimented.

The Sovereigns subsequently assembled at Pilnitz, particularly the Emperor of Germany, transmitted their warm approbation by a message through more than one channel; the French Princes, through Mons. Cazales; Catherine of Russia ordered her Embassador, Count de Woronzow, formally to communicate the same; Stanislaus, the unfortunate King of Poland, sent him his likeness on a gold medal; his late Majesty, George III., not only gave it an attentive perusal, but had a number of copies elegantly bound, which he distributed among his friends, with the remark, that it was "a book which every gentleman ought to read." Trinity College, Dublin, in full convocation, unanimously conferred upon him, January 1, 1791, the honorary degree of L L. D., and afterwards voted him an address in a gold box—"as the powerful advocate of the constitution, the friend of public order, virtue, and the happiness of mankind; and, in testimony of the high respect entertained by the University for the various endowments of his capacious mind, and for his superior talents and abilities." An address of thanks from the resident graduates of Oxford was communicated through Mr. Windham, in their own language, "as a tribute which we are desirous of paying to splendid talents employed in the advancement of public good;" and, "as Members of a University, whose institutions embrace every useful and ornamental part of learning, we should esteem ourselves justified in making this address, if we had only to offer you our thanks for the valuable accession which the stock of our national literature has received by the publication of your important 'Reflections.'" A temporary cabal prevented the diploma of L L. D. being conferred on him, though his philosophical essay on the Sublime and Beautiful forms a book of reference in their establishment. The Archbishop of Aix, and others of the dignified clergy of France, wrote several letters, expressive of their obligations and acknowledgments, "that the first orator of England had become their defender." Nearly all of our own church, the great body of the nobility, the most eminent statesmen, philosophers, and several of the chief men of letters, pronounced him the saviour of our own and of all established governments.

Gibbon was particularly warm in his applause. "I thirst," said he, a short time before he saw the volume, "for Mr. Burke's Reflections on the Revolution in France." Afterwards he writes, in two letters, "Burke's book is a most admirable medicine against the French disease.—I admire his eloquence ; I approve his politics ; I adore his chivalry ; and I can almost forgive his reverence for church establishments." "I conceive," said Cumberland, seldom given to eulogium, but who on this occasion was surprised into an express letter of congratulation, "there is not to be found in all the writings of my day, perhaps I may say not in the English language, so brilliant a cluster of fine and beautiful passages as we are presented with in Edmund Burke's inimitable tract on the French Revolution."

Many similar testimonies might be transcribed, but that delivered soon afterwards by a professed political opponent, the late Lord (then Mr.) Erskine, is too just and characteristic to be omitted. "I shall take care to put Mr. Burke's work, on the French Revolution, into the hands of those whose principles are left to my formation. I shall take care that they have the advantage of doing, in the regular progression of youthful studies, what I have done even in the short intervals of laborious life ; that they shall transcribe, with their own hands, from all the works of this most extraordinary person, and from the last among the rest, the soundest truths of religion ; the justest principles of morals, inculcated and rendered delightful by the most sublime eloquence ; the highest reach of philosophy, brought down to the level of common minds, by the most captivating taste ; the most enlightened observations on history, and the most copious collection of useful maxims from the experience of common life."

Dr. Beattie, who, as far as opinions went, had always been opposed to him in politics, but who knew the soundness of his principles when any real danger threatened the state, thus writes, April 25th, 1790, six months before the publication.—"I wish Mr. Burke would publish what he intended on the present state of France. He is a man of principle, and a friend to religion, to law, and to monarchy, as well as to liberty."

On the other hand, this book was reprobated as assailing the very foundation of liberty, by a party bold, numerous, and able, at the head of which, or at least countenancing it, stood Mr. Fox. His censures were unreserved and delivered as he himself avowed in all companies public and private, whenever it became a subject of discussion; some months afterwards he termed it in the House of Commons, with more of pique or less of judgment than could be expected from such a man, "a libel on all free governments," and, "he disliked it as much as any of Mr. Paine's;" almost verifying a remark of Burke at a future period, that "the French Revolution had not merely shaken all the thrones of Europe, but shaken his friend Fox's heart and understanding out of their right places." The party besides embraced many other Members of Opposition, some philosophers, the great body of literary men, some clergymen, many lawyers, many dissenting ministers, and nine-tenths of the profession of physic—all therefore belonging to the educated classes, but the great majority without claim to any practical acquaintance with politics; men deep in speculation, and in books, but wholly ignorant of the workings of governments; who knew nothing of human nature in great and untried emergencies, such as the state of France then exhibited; who mistook warm feelings for sound principles; some who, with good intentions toward mankind, would have committed the grossest errors in reducing them to practice; and many whose views upon the constitution of the country were more than questionable.

By this body Mr. Burke and his Work* were assailed with a degree of animosity unprecedented in the political warfare even of England, and so perseveringly continued to the present day by the remnants of that order of politicians, that among the half-read classes of society who seldom like the labour of inquiring or thinking for themselves, there is a kind of common agreement to censure his conduct and doctrines without knowing what they really were. No pains were spared to produce this effect. Every epithet of abuse in the language was applied to him; every action, or expression of his life that could be tortured into a sinister meaning, was raked up in order to show his inconsistency, yet after all proved so few and frivolous, that they have not been thought worth repeating; and thus, he "whose whole life had been a struggle for the liberty of others" was reviled as the enemy of all liberty.

The truth was, that their and his ideas of liberty were, and always had been, different. They were angry that a man, so long and generally celebrated as its advocate, should hesitate to give his sanction to any thing which assumed the name; they made no allowances for having mistaken him; because he differed in opinion with them, it was inferred, however absurdly, that he must differ from himself. They thought that liberty, no matter in what form it came, or how accompanied, or by whatever qualities or characteristics distinguished, must necessarily be good. They looked chiefly to the abstract figure of the thing, rather than to the effects it produced.

---

* A celebrated phrase, contained in this book, was bruited about in every form of speech and writing, in order to excite the popular indignation. In speaking of the destruction of the nobility and gentry, he said, that along with these its natural protectors learning would be "trodden down under the hoofs of a swinish multitude." The expression, though plainly figurative, was tortured to mean that he actually thought the people no better than swine, yet all other impassioned writers have dealt in the same license of language without reproach or even remark; among which the reader will immediately recollect "the common dung o' the soil," and many others as strong, applied to the mass of mankind.

Mr. Burke, on the contrary, would not allow the term liberty to be applicable to a system whose course was stained by incessant violence and bloodshed, which inflicted or permitted the most grinding tyranny and injustice on persons and property, which was in itself a crude and untried theory, unsanctioned by reason and undisciplined by law; at variance with the experience of mankind, and with the ancient and reasonable habits and institutions of the country itself. The liberty decreed by the National Assembly he considered the vilest of mockeries. Liberty, no matter how plausible the form, was, in his opinion, liberty, only when it secured equal civil rights, equal justice and protection, equal social enjoyments and privileges to all members of the community.

Sentiments similar to these occur so frequently in his earlier and later works, in all his speeches and writings, that it seems strange how they could ever be misunderstood. The passage already quoted from his speech against the repeal of the Marriage Act, in 1782, is strongly illustrative of similar rational principles. Another passage from an old report of one of his speeches at Bristol, in 1774, speaks the same language: "The distinguishing part of our constitution is its liberty. To preserve that liberty inviolate seems the particular duty and proper trust of a Member of the House of Commons. *But the liberty, the only liberty I mean, is a liberty connected with order; that not only exists along with virtue* *and order, but which cannot exist without them.*" Addressing the same constituents in 1780, in allusion to the condition of the Roman Catholics, he says, "*I must fairly tell you, that so far as my principles are concerned* (principles that I hope will only depart with my last breath) *that I have no idea of a liberty unconnected with honesty and justice ;* * * factions in republics have been and are full as capable as monarchs of the most cruel oppression and injustice ; it is but too true, that the love and even the very idea of genuine liberty is extremely rare."—

Any one professing such sentiments could not in fact, to preserve his consistency, do otherwise than oppose the French Revolution as Mr. Burke did. We have seen that he had his doubts of its nature from the first, and far from blowing hot and cold upon it in a breath like some of his contemporaries, gradually rose from caution to apprehension, from apprehension to certainty, that such proceedings as he saw going on could be productive only of enormous evils. He did not hate the revolution in Franch simply because it was a revolution,* but because it was an execrably bad one ; or rather the utter dissolution at a blow, of government, religion, and morals,—all the elements which not merely bind men together, but have in fact from the condition of savages made us men. He did not war against liberty, but against the abuses committed under its name, not against freedom but against licentiousness. He allowed no inherent power in the half or the majority of a nation to annihilate the persons, property, or honours of the remainder at their will and pleasure, by way of political experiment or speculative improvement; he could not admit the right of any people to do what they pleased, until he first knew what it pleased them to do."

---

* It is well known that he highly approved of the revolution in Poland going on about the same time, because, instead of plunging their country into anarchy, the leading men there exerted all their talents to rescue it from such a state by instituting a wise and constitutional form of government. Unhappily it proved ill-timed. Catherine of Russia made it a pretext for annihilating both it and the existence of the country as an independent state ; and Buonaparte, when it was in his power, had not generosity enough to reverse the iniquitous proceeding.

It is a remarkable fact, and another instance of the keenness and length of view of Mr. Burke, that though the danger was obvious to him, neither the government nor the nation at large had any idea that French opinions were so generally diffused in England, or that they had made so many converts. But the publication of his book disclosed the extent of the mischief by the number of answers it produced; the writer of this has counted no less than thirty-eight which came out within a few months; several have doubtless escaped his notice, and some may have appeared at a later period; but were all the letters, essays, fragments, and invectives of every denomination collected, which have appeared then and since, in magazines, reviews, newspapers, annual registers, and every form of publication, periodical and otherwise, they would amount to many thousands.

In the list of the opponents were the names of Priestley, Price (who dying soon after the appearance of the "Reflections," which his sermon had partly provoked, was said by his friends to have hurt him and by others to have killed him,) Earl Stanhope, Mrs. Wolstonecraft, Mrs. Macaulay Graham, Mr. (now Sir James) Mackintosh, and Thomas Paine. Some of their works have voluntarily sought oblivion, and some have been reluctantly forced into it. The "Vindiciæ Gallicæ" alone was the production of a sober inquirer, a scholar, and a gentleman, at once bold and liberal in his opposition, who could advocate what he thought freedom to others without madly assaulting the foundations of our own, who could investigate doctrines without descending to personal abuse of the author, who, in endeavouring to refute them, could admit his worth, his extraordinary powers, and, in spite of the clamour to the contrary, the general consistency of his life and principles. Such a man was, and still is, Sir James Mackintosh, a statesman of the first class, who, if not at the head of his party, is certainly not jostled from it by any thing like superiority of mind among his colleagues.

Of a very different description was "The Rights of Man," by Thomas Paine. This remarkable character, who had arrived from America in 1787, brought with him a letter of introduction to Mr. Burke from the Hon. Henry Laurens, Ex-President of Congress, and who it will be remembered had been released from the Tower in 1781, by the exertions of the former, requesting the exertion of his influence to attract public notice to some mechanical contrivances of Mr. Paine, particularly the model of an iron bridge. Mr. Burke, with his accustomed hospitality, invited him to Beaconsfield, took him during a summer excursion to Yorkshire to several iron founderies there in order to gain the opinions of practical men, and introduced him to several persons of rank; to which there is an allusion in the following note to Mr. Wilkes:—

"My dear Sir,

"I come at your requisition to the service of a cause rendered dearer to me by your accession to it. Since you will have it so, I will eat venison in honour of old England; let me know at Gerrard Street when and where.

You make too much of the prattle of the world and the effect of any opinion of mine whether real or supposed. The libels and the panegyrics of the newspapers can neither frighten nor flatter me out of my principles; but (except for the evil of the example) it is no matter at all if they did. However, since you think my appearance something, you shall have me in my blue and buff; we all indeed long very much to see you, and are much your humble servants. I am just going to dine with the Duke of Portland, in company with the great American Paine, whom I take with me.

"Ever, my dear Sir,
"Your most affectionate faithful friend,
"EDMUND BURKE.
"Beaconsfield, August 18th, 1788.

At this time, Paine, whom he did not distinctly know to be an Englishman, professed to have wholly relinquished politics. But soon afterwards visiting France in order to inspect the plans and models in the Public Office of Bridges and Highways, introduced by a letter from Dr. Franklin to the Duke de la Rochefoucauld, the incipient disorders of that country revived in his mind the dormant spirit of turbulence and dissatisfaction towards existing institutions; he returned to England to all appearance well informed of the designs of the popular leaders, of which many intelligible intimations were dropped to Mr. Burke, with a recommendation to him that he should endeavour to introduce a *more enlarged system of liberty* into England, using Reform in Parliament as the most obvious means.

This hint, thrown out probably to sound him, was, as may be believed, coldly received. "Do you really imagine, Mr. Paine, that the constitution of this kingdom requires such innovations, or could exist with them, or that any reflecting man would seriously engage in them? You are aware that I have all my life opposed such schemes of reform; of course, because I knew them not to be reform." Not discouraged by this rebuff, Paine continued his correspondence from Paris in the summer of 1789, and there is no doubt whatever, first communicated to his distinguished acquaintance certain information that the destruction of the monarchy was resolved upon; that the leaders had determined to set fire to the four corners of France sooner than not carry their principles into practice; and that no danger was to be apprehended from the army, for it was *gained.* This remarkable note is said by a friend of Mr. Burke's to be dated only three days before the destruction of the Bastile.

Though his intimacy with Mr. Burke had declined previously to the appearance of the "Reflections," his more noxious peculiarities remained unknown; the leveller and the deist being shrouded under the guise of the ingenious mechanist. But the "Rights of Man," written as an answer to Mr. Burke's work, exhibited at once the mental deformity of the man, inimical to nearly every thing that bore the stamp of authority, or of time, or of opinion. In accordance with this system, he had long before stifled the best feelings of our nature by violation of the marriage tie; he had divested himself of the troublesome restraints of religion; he had shaken off all confined notions of attachment to his country. Nothing of an Englishman remained of him but the name, and even this he tried to extinguish by becoming successively by adoption an American and a Frenchman: but as his principles were a scandal to all, all perhaps would willingly be rid of the dishonour attached to owning such a citizen.

It was his aim, by perverting what capacity he possessed, not to make men better or happier but discontented with what they were, with what they knew, or with what they already enjoyed. His systems, both in religion and politics, led not merely to the disorganization of states, but of the human mind itself, by setting it adrift on the waters of doubt and despair, without a resting-place or land-mark for its guidance in this world, or hope in the next. To a style of writing and reasoning well adapted to impose upon ordinary understandings, he added a cool temper and designing head, unfettered by the common restraints and scruples of mankind. To the trades of stay-maker, schoolmaster, and exciseman, in his native country, he had added, in America, the frequent resort of desperate men, that of a patriot. He had proved a brute to his wife, a cheat to his trust, a traitor to his country, a reviler of his God and of his King; and having already successfully aided and abetted rebellion abroad, seemed to be cut out for the presiding genius of a revolution at home, if not prematurely taken off by the hand of the executioner. But, as if in his own person to warn us of the desolating tendency of his doctrines, he completed the catalogue of his offences by adultery with the wife of his friend, by the brutal treatment and desertion of his victim, by inveterate drunkenness and abominable filth of person. The very excess of his moral degradation almost made him an object of compassion. His life was evil, and his end miserable.

The book was characteristic of the man. Its purpose was, through the debasing principle of envy, which is after all the principle of a leveller, to reduce all mankind to one standard, to write up a sort of *confusion made easy*, by addressing the baser against the better passions of our nature. It was an open declaration of hostility to all the institutions which we in England had been accustomed to consider as our ornament and pride; not a reform of the real or imaginary abuses of government, but a tacit recommendation to pull it down altogether for the pleasure of building afresh on the republican model; good perhaps in the eyes of an American, but at variance with the habits, the feelings, the opinions, the honest convictions and prejudices of an Englishman. It affords an illustration of the phrenzy of the day, that this production was devoured rather than read, idolised rather than praised by that strong party, many of them of rank and influence, who intent on committing a species of moral suicide, disseminated it in cheap editions through the country, thus flinging a fire-brand into every cottage to burst out and consume themselves; while in the clubs and societies of cities the same insane spirit of animosity, under cover of affected satisfaction, was shown in the favourite toast constantly drunk,—thanks to Mr. Burke for the discussion he has provoked,—as if they believed or wished that he had injured those vital interests of the state, of which in fact his book proved the salvation.

A reply from the correspondent to whom the Reflections were addressed, about the opening of the Session in November, 1790, gave Mr. Burke an opportunity of following up his blow, by the "Letter to a Member of the National Assembly." In this, which appeared in February, 1791, he advances many new arguments, enforces others, and draws the character of some of their writers, whom he terms "the jays and magpies of philosophy," particularly Rousseau,—"the great founder and professor of the philosophy of vanity," of whom he knew something or heard almost daily when that strange character was in England in 1766—with truth and ingenuiy. He asserts from positive knowledge that the excesses of the Revolution were not accidental, as some believed, or pretended to believe, but systematically designed, even previous to the meeting of the States-General; hints at the necessity for that coalition of the Sovereigns of Europe against France which took place a few months afterward; and explicitly states the intention of the prevailing faction to put the King to death whenever his name became no longer necessary to their designs.

The declaration by the French ambassador at this period, of his Sovereign's acceptance of the new constitution, drew from Mr. Burke a paper privately presented to the Ministry, "Hints for a Memorial to M. de Montmorin."—It recommended the offer of British mediation between that Monarch and his subjects on the basis of a free constitution, to be guaranteed, if required, by England; and in case of refusal by the popular party, to intimate the design of withdrawing our Minister from a Court where the Sovereign no longer enjoyed personal liberty. General opinion since has been in favour of the policy of the advice.

In the mean time several threatening indications proclaimed an approaching breach in the Whig party, very few of whom, scarcely one in short, except three or four personal friends, could be persuaded by Mr. Burke of the irretrievable mischiefs in progress in France, and likely to approach our own shores. Mr. Fox expressed his approval of the principles though not of the proceedings there, twice or thrice in unmeasured terms; once, April 15th, in a debate on the Russian armament, when Mr. Burke rising to reply, was prevented by continued cries of question, and the late hour (three) of the morning; and again on a bill providing a constitution for Canada, April 8th, when that gentleman was not present; on this occasion he directed pointed censure against some of the chief doctrines in Mr. Burke's book, directly questioned the utility of hereditary power or honours, and of titles of rank, concluding with a sneer at "ribbons red and blue." These opinions might have been honest, though perhaps neither very sound nor in the best taste; they were unquestionably imprudent; they were verbatim the revolutionary cant of the day, to which sanction was given by a man of no ordinary weight and influence in the country; and they could not well be considered otherwise than as a direct challenge to discussion addressed by him to his old associate.*

As such Mr. Burke evidently considered it, when, on the 6th of May, on the same bill, he rose to state his sentiments in reply. But in adverting to the French Constitution by name, and the unhappy scenes to which it had given rise, he was loudly called to order from the Opposition benches; Mr. Fox, who had himself made allusions as strong by implication and by name, unexpectedly assailed him by an ironical defence; Mr. Burke, noticing this circumstance, resumed his argument, and again experienced successively seven other formal interruptions at short intervals by speeches to order, from different members of the same party, others on the opposite side maintaining he was perfectly in order, and presenting, amid contending shouts of Chair! chair! Hear! hear! Order! order! Go on! go on! a scene which Mr. Burke remarked at the moment was only to be paralleled among those in a neighbouring country of which he was endeavouring to convey some idea to the House.

At length, an express vote of censure for noticing the affairs of France, was moved against him by Lord Sheffield, and seconded by Mr. Fox; Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, who had repeatedly cheered the speech, leaned to his views, urged that he was in order, that he was grateful to the right hon. gentleman for the manly struggle made against French principles, that he should support him whenever the danger approached, and that his zeal and eloquence in the cause entitled him to the warmest gratitude of all his fellow subjects. Mr. Fox followed in a vehement address, alternately rebuking and complimenting Mr. Burke, in a high strain, vindicating his own opinions, questioning the truth and consistency of those of his right hon. friend who he must ever esteem his master, but who nevertheless seemed to have forgotten the lessons he had taught him, and quoting in support of the charge of inconsistency several sarcastic and ludicrous remarks, of little moment at any time, and scarcely worth repeating then, but which, as they had been expressed fourteen and fifteen years before, seemed to have been raked up purposely for the occasion.

---

* Mr. Sheridan had also about the same time reiterated the same opinions.

There was an appearance of premeditation and want of generosity in this, which hurt Mr. Burke, as he afterwards expressed to a friend, more than any public occurrence of his life, and he rose to reply under the influence of very painful but very strong feelings. He complained, after debating the main question, of being treated with harshness and malignity for which the motive seemed unaccountable—of being personally attacked from a quarter where he least expected it after an intimacy of more than twenty-two years,—of his public sentiments and writings being garbled, and his confidential communications violated, to give colour to an unjust charge; and that, though at his time of life it was obviously indiscreet to provoke enemies or to lose friends as he could not hope to acquire others, yet if his steady adherence to the

British constitution placed him in such a dilemma, he would risk all, and as public duty and public prudence taught him, with his last breath exclaim "Fly from the French constitution!" Mr. Fox here whispered, "there is no loss of friendship." "I regret to say, there is," was the reply—"I know the value of my line of conduct; I have, indeed, made a great sacrifice; I have done my duty though I have lost my friend, for there is something in the detested French constitution that envenoms every thing it touches;" and, after a variety of comments on the question, previous and subsequent to this avowal, concluded with an eloquent apostrophe to the two great heads of their respective parties, steadfastly to guard against innovation and new theories whatever might be their other other differences, the sacred edifice of the British constitution.

Unusually agitated by this public and pointed renunciation of long intimacy, Mr. Fox found relief in tears.—Some moments elapsed before he could find utterance, when, besides touching on the bill and on French affairs, an eloquent appeal burst forth to his old and revered friend—to the remembrance of their past attachment—their unalienable friendship—their reciprocal affection, as dear and almost as binding as the ties of nature between father and son. Seldom had there been heard in the House of Commons an appeal so pathetic and so personal. Yet even at this moment when seemingly dissolved in tenderness, the pertinacity of the professed, thorough-bred disputant prevailed over the feelings of the man; he gave utterance to unusually bitter sarcasms, reiterated his objectionable remarks, adding others not of the most conciliatory tendency, and of course rather aggravating than extenuating the original offence. Rejoinders on both sides followed, without subsiding into more amicable sentiments, and thenceforward the intimacy of these illustrious men ceased.

Such are, in brief, the facts connected with this memorable dispute, which excited more general interest, and produced more important results, than any thing similar in our political annals. Opposition soon saw in it the loss of much of that consequence they had hitherto enjoyed as a body in the State, and were thunderstruck at the consequences; uttering the harshest animadversions upon Mr. Burke, not only at the breaking up of the House, but on all occasions afterwards during his life, and even since his death, as well as by writers of the same political partialities, not one of whom but misrepresents the circumstances of the quarrel, or attributes it on the part of that gentleman, to a preconcerted scheme, or spleen at not being permitted to dictate the conduct of the body of which he was a member.

These assertions are now known to be wholly false. If design can be attributed to either party, it would seem to have rested rather with Mr. Fox and his friends than with Mr. Burke, for though they probably did not desire an open rupture with him, they went the straight way to work to effect it; for there is not a stronger instance than this in Parliamentary history, of what may be termed a *dead set* being made upon a Member to prevent his delivering his sentiments on an extraordinary and questionable event, and this upon the trifling pretext of being out of order. Admitting him to have been out of order, which he was not as the House decided, was it the business of his *friends* to attack him upon that head?—of the men, with whom he had been so long associated, whose career he had often directed, whose battles he had fought, whose credit he had been the first to raise in public esteem—to assail him with vehement disapprobation, persevering interruptions, and votes of censure? There was something in this of political ingratitude, and obviously much indiscretion, for it impressed a general belief in the country that the minority, instead of viewing the French question as a matter of indifference, or even as one of calm deliberation, had at once and so heartily adopted its spirit, as to proceed to extremities with one of the heads of their body, sooner than hear him treat it with reprobation.

There are a variety of other reasons which tell strongly in favour of Mr. Burke. Far from broaching it as a provocative to quarrel, he had on the contrary, studiously avoided it in this and the preceding sessions, until introduced by the very persons who now professed to wish to avoid the subject. It was obviously his interest not to disagree with those with whom he had been so long connected, and more especially at this moment, when it was believed, in consequence of words which fell from the King on the dispute with Russia, that they were coming into power. He had already explicitly declared his intention to separate from the dearest friends, who should give countenance to the revolutionary doctrines then afloat, and the breach with Mr. Sheridan proved that this was no idle threat. He doubtless felt displeased that his general principles should be, if not misrepresented, at least so far misapplied, as to become the means of charging him with dereliction of principle. He might be angry that this should be done by one who had so long been his friend, and who made it his chief boast even at the moment that he was his disciple. He could not be well pleased that this disciple should condemn his book without ceremony, as an attack on all free governments. He could not be highly conciliated by that friend withdrawing from him, as had been the case for the six or seven preceding years, much of that public confidence, which he had hitherto reposed in him; for as little similarity existed in their private pursuits, they were political friends or they were nothing; and the withholding of confidence on such subjects became, in fact, a tacit dissolution of the compact by which they were united.

But in addition to these considerations there were, in the cause of disunion, circumstances which rendered it quite impossible that they could continue on the same terms as formerly. The dispute was not about a private or trivial, but a great constitutional matter which superseded all minor considerations,—not a hackneyed or speculative topic on which they might amicably differ and pass on to the consideration of others on which they agreed, but one in its consequences involving the very existence of the state. It was a question wholly new; it was one which agitated almost every man in the kingdom; it was constantly and progressively before the eyes of Parliament; it met the leaders at every turn in debate, and in some form or another mingled in every discussion of fact or principle. It was in itself full of difficulties, of jagged points and sharp angles, against which neither of them could rub without feeling some degree of irritation; and it was one on which from the first each seemed to have staked his whole reputation for political wisdom against the other; Mr. Fox with all the enthusiasm of a generous, confiding, and unwary man; Mr. Burke with the penetration of a profound philosopher and the calculating sagacity of a practical statesman. In support of their opinions both were quite as vehement as the case required; the one pushing on, or being pushed by Opposition, to apologise for the misdeeds of the French Revolution; the other outstripping the van of the Ministry in their bitter reprobation.

Constant contention such as this promised to be, "hand to hand and foot to foot," as Mr. Burke expressed his determination to contend, could lead, especially with an old associate, only to coldness, and from coldness to alienation, from alienation to dislike, the steps are few, and quick, and certain. A breach, therefore, sooner or later was inevitable. Whether it ought not to have taken place by degrees, and with less of publicity, is merely matter of opinion, and at best is of little consequence. An open and decisive expression of his mind (to a fault) had hitherto characterised Mr. Burke upon all occasions, and he probably thought the same mode of conduct now, more honourable in itself, and more calculated to impress upon the country a sense of the magnitude of its danger, and the sincerity of his conviction that the danger was near.

From the moment indeed that Mr. Fox pronounced such decided panegyrics upon the French Constitution, and particularly after the 15th of April, when Mr. Burke, as related, was prevented from replying by the clamour of his own party, a rupture between them appeared at hand. The former long afterwards regretted the interruption the latter had then received, saying that though the conflict between them might have been hotter and fiercer at the moment, it would probably have left no unpleasant feelings behind. The very next morning a general alarm at the consequences spread through the party. Several conciliatory expressions were offered to Mr. Burke, and some apologies ; many even who agreed with Mr. Fox's opinions did not hesitate to condemn him for imprudence in expressing them, though in fact he had been urged to do it, and for not having already done so, two or three of the number had been tempted to say he was deficient in firmness. On the other hand, some of Mr. Burke's personal friends and the connexions of the

Duke of Portland, who thought nearly as he did of the proceedings in France, wished him nevertheless to pass over the opinions and the challenges of Mr. Fox and Mr. Sheridan in silence. This he urged was impossible. He had been personally alluded to; and though treated without the slightest consideration or respect, this he would willingly forget; but without giving any cause for such a proceeding, he had been thrice within a week pointedly dared to the discussion, and, standing as he did, pledged to the House and to the country upon the subject, which no other Member was, it would look like political cowardice to shrink from the contest. He thought Mr. Fox's opinions of great weight in the country, and should not be permitted to circulate through it uncontradicted. He was further impelled by an imperious sense of public duty, which he considered paramount to all other considerations. These reasons were deemed scarcely sufficient; he further heard that the adherents of Mr. Fox had determined to interrupt him on the point of order; and that gentleman himself, in company with a friend, waited upon him to ask that the discussion might be postponed till another opportunity, which Mr. Burke pointed out was not likely to occur again during the Session. To convince Mr. Fox, however, that nothing personal or offensive was intended, he stated explicitly what he meant to say, all the heads of his arguments, and the limitations he designed to impose on himself; an instance of candour which Mr. Fox returned by relating the favourable expressions of himself just alluded to, recently uttered by the King. The interview, therefore, though not quite satisfactory, excited no hostile feelings; on the contrary, they walked down to the House together, but found that Mr. Sheridan had moved to postpone the re-commitment of the bill until after the Easter holidays, when, as already stated, the discussion came on the 6th of May. Something like premeditated hostility on the part of the minority towards Mr. Burke appeared in the abuse heaped upon him during the interval by the newspapers in their interest.

That the behaviour of this body to him in the whole of the business was resentful and imprudent, if not meriting a harsher name, has been generally agreed. That of Mr. Fox himself is also difficult to explain. In treating of a new constitution for a colony which embraced English, and French, and American interests, it was perfectly in order for him to advert to, and contrast their respective constitutions with that of the one proposed; but it seemed strange that to another member of at least equal talents and of the same party, the same privilege should be denied because he drew a different conclusion. It was also matter for surprise that he should profess such warm admiration of the French Rovolution, when confessedly not one beneficial result had arisen from it to that country, or seemed likely to arise either to it or to any other. If this admiration were sincere, what are we to conclude of his political wisdom and prudence? if it were not, the inference is equally against his political honesty. It is no more than justice to him to state, however, that what he panegyrised in the gross, he condemned almost uniformly in the detail, and much more in private conversation than he could be brought to express in debate; and it is on record, that though on two occasions he applauded by name, and in the hearing of the whole House, the new French *Constitution*, as " the most stupendous and glorious edifice of liberty which had been erected on the foundation of human integrity in any time or country," he afterwards, when pushed by Mr. Burke, explained away his meaning by saying that it applied to the Revolution,—not to the Constitution. His sentiments seemed, in fact, more than once doubtful and wavering; it has been always believed that he was urged on by sinister influence, and an innate passion for popularity; and that, having irrecoverably lost Mr. Burke by going too far, he was obliged to go further in order to retain Mr. Sheridan, who, it is said, exacted an explicit declaration of his opinions on this head as the price of his continued exertions in Parliament. Far be it from the wish of the present writer to "lean upon the memory of a great man," but bare justice to another equally great, and, in some respects, greater, requires that truth should be opposed to that multiplied, unwearied, and still-continued abuse and misrepresentation applied to him in consequence of this schism.*

An anecdote of this memorable evening related by a Member who had adopted Mr. Fox's opinions, evinces, contrary to the inference he draws, that Mr. Burke, instead of displaying the calmness of one who had come down to the House prepared for a rupture, felt all the irritation which unpremeditated quarrels always produce, and the harsh reception he had experienced was so calculated to excite.

"The most powerful feelings," says Mr. Curwen,† "were manifested on the adjournment of the House. Whilst I was waiting for my carriage, Mr. Burke came up to me and requested, as the night was wet, I would set him down—I could not refuse—though I confess I felt a reluctance in complying. As soon as the carriage-door was shut, he complimented me on my being no friend to the revolutionary doctrines of the French, on which he spoke with great warmth for a few minutes, when he paused to afford me an opportunity of approving the view he had taken of those measures in the House. Former experience had taught me the consequences of differing from his opinions, yet at the moment I could not help feeling disinclined to disguise my sentiments. Mr. Burke, catching hold of the check-string, furiously exclaimed, "You are one of these people! set me down!" With some difficulty I restrained him;—we had then reached Charing Cross—a silence ensued, which was preserved till we reached his house in Gerrard Street, when he hurried out of the carriage without speaking, and thus our intercourse ended."

---

* For a more detailed account of it, and of the circumstances by which it was preceded and accompanied (the only full and fair one indeed which exists) see Dodsley's Annual Register for 1791.

† Travels in Ireland, vol. ii.

It is to the credit of Mr. Burke, however, that when his own personal and political interests were at stake, he displayed nothing of this spirit of irritation, as the following anecdote, recorded by the same gentleman, testifies, and it is only one among many others:—"On the first question of the Regency I differed from Mr. Fox: when the division was proceeding, Mr. Burke espied me remaining in my seat; he turned about, and repeatedly called on me, but as I obeyed not the summons, a laugh at his expense ensued; though he was evidently displeased, I must do him the justice to say he did not resent it."

The House having adjourned till the 11th, Mr. Fox again explained away his opinions against aristocracy, which Mr. Pitt rather sarcastically said, he was glad to hear, for he and every one else had formed a different estimate of his meaning, from what had fallen from him the evening they had last assembled. Mr. Burke spoke at length on the question, and on the situation in which he stood with his party. Mr. Fox again assailed him with censures and personalities, of which Mr. Burke in a rejoinder took scarcely any notice, and without a syllable of personality or recrimination, so that in the whole of this affair, the loss of temper would seem to have been quite as great in the former as in the latter.

A few days afterward, a paragraph appeared in the Morning Chronicle, stating, that the great body of the Whigs of England having decided upon the dispute between Mr. Fox and Mr. Burke, in favour of the purer doctrines of the former, the latter was in consequence to retire from Parliament. This gratuitous sentence of ejectment from his seat, though meant as an insult, only reiterated an intention he had himself publicly expressed some time before, of retiring from the House of Commons, whenever the impeachment should be concluded. But the intimation in the first portion of the paragraph being re-echoed, in and out of Parliament, he thought an answer necessary, in order to test what Whig principles really were, by comparing those avowed by Mr. Fox and his friends, with those maintained at the Revolution, the era of their greatest purity. For this purpose appeared in July, "An Appeal from the New to the Old Whigs." In this pamphlet, which is couched in a very calm tone, and written in the third person, he successfully accomplishes his purpose of proving that his doctrines were in perfect coincidence with the allowed standard of correctness; maintains his consistency; states his views at different periods of his political career; and assigns the chief motives for writing the work so much condemned by the party. "He proposed to prove that the present state of things in France is not a transient evil, productive, as some have too favourably represented it, of a lasting good, but that the present evil is only the means of producing future, and (if that were possible) worse evils. That it is not an undigested, imperfect, and crude scheme of liberty, which may gradually be mellowed and ripened into an orderly and social freedom, but that it is so fundamentally wrong as to be utterly incapable of correcting itself by any length of time, or of being formed into any mode of polity of which a Member of the House of Commons could publicly declare his approbation. The decisive boldness of this and many similar predictions, and their exact fulfilment, will often astonish the reader in the writings of this extraordinary man.

It was not one of the least remarkable events of the period, that the very next measure which occupied the House of Commons was one brought forward by Mr. Fox, which, while attacking others for their inconsistency seemed calculated to render his own more glaring, as in the late quarrel he had expressly alluded to difference of opinion with Mr. Burke on this very point—to whom, in fact, the present was a strong though unavowed acknowledgment of the superiority of his views on a great constitutional question. This measure was the bill for empowering juries to try the questions, both of law and fact, in prosecutions for libel.

It has been already noticed, that a bill for this purpose was introduced by Mr. Dowdeswell, in January 1771, in consequence of the discussions which arose from the verdict of the jury in Almon's trial for publishing Junius's Letter to the King. This bill, Mr. Burke as the moving spirit of his party, not only suggested but drew up with his own hand and supported in the House by an able speech. Ministry however resisted it, and among others Mr. Fox pointedly. Lord Shelburne and his friends gave it a hollow support; Mr. George Grenville and his party scouted it, and Mr. Horne Tooke attacked it anonymously in the newspapers;—so much were the judgment and constitutional knowledge of Mr. Burke even then in advance of those of his ablest contemporaries. This ungracious reception probably prevented him from renewing it. Mr. Fox, at the present moment, adopted it as his own; and though it is an understood rule for one Member of Parliament, before he seizes upon the proposition of another, to communicate with him, Mr. Fox did not think this necessary, although no breach had then (February) taken place between them: he said nothing to Mr. Burke, made no apology, acknowledged no obligation, but adopted the spirit, and as nearly as possible, the words of his bill of 1771.* It is difficult to suppose

---

* For the information of the reader, the chief heads of each are subjoined.

Jury Bill of 1771.	Jury Bill of 1791.
I. Whereas doubts and controversies have arisen concerning the rights of jurors to try the whole matter charged in indictments, and informations for seditious and other libels; for settling and clearing the same in time to come, be it enacted, &c. that from and after, &c., the jurors who shall be duly empannelled and sworn to try the issue between the King and the defendant, upon any indictment or information for a seditious libel, or a libel under any other denomination or description, shall, to all intents and purposes, be held and reputed, in law and in right, competent to try every part of the matter laid or charged in the said indictment or information, comprehending the criminal intention of the defendant, and evil tendency of the libel charged, as	I. Whereas doubts have arisen whether on the trial of an indictment or information for the making or publishing any libel, where an issue or issues are joined between the King and the defendant or defendants, on the plea of not guilty, pleaded, it be competent to the jury impannelled to try the same, to give their verdict upon the whole matter in issue; be it therefore declared and enacted, &c. &c., that on every such trial, the jury sworn to try the issue may give a general verdict of guilty or not guilty upon the whole matter put in issue upon such indictment or information, and shall not be required or directed by the Court or Judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, to find the defendant or defendants guilty, merely on the proof of the pub-

he did not know who the real author was, though this may be; but the bill itself, from having opposed it, he

well as the mere fact of the publication thereof; and the application by inuendo of blanks, initial letters, pictures, and other devices, any law or usage to the contrary notwithstanding.	lication by such defendant or defendants, if the paper charged to be a libel, and of the sense ascribed to the same on such indictment or information.
II. Provided that nothing in the act be construed to prevent or restrain the judges or justices before whom such issues shall be tried, from instructing the jurors concerning the law upon the matter so in issue, as fully as may be done in other misdemeanors, where the jurors do, and ought to try the whole matter; nor to restrain the jurors from finding the matter special, if the law to them shall seem difficult and doubtful.	II. Provided always, that on every such trial the court or judge before whom such indictment or information shall be tried, shall, according to their, or his discretion, give their or his opinion of directions to the jury on the matter in issue between the King and the defendant or defendants, in like manner as in other criminal cases.
III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall be construed to take from the defendant, after verdict found, the right of laying such evidence before the Court in which such verdict was found, as may tend to mitigation or extenuation of his said offence, as has been usually practised before this act.	III. Provided also, that nothing herein contained shall extend, or be construed to extend, to prevent the jury from finding a special verdict in their discretion as in other criminal cases.
	IV. Provided also, that in case the jury shall find the defendant or defendants guilty, it shall and may be lawful for the said defendant or defendants to move in arrest of judgment on such ground and in such manner as by law he or they might have done before the passing of this act, any thing herein contained to the contrary notwithstanding.

could not well have forgotten. Whatever merit, therefore, be in this celebrated measure, and there is unquestionably much, the larger proportion of it unquestionably belongs to Mr. Burke.

His labours at the commencement of this troubled session had been equally arduous, though less personally agitating than those which occurred towards its close. An important constitutional question was mooted, whether the impeachment had not abated by the dissolution of Parliament in 1790? He maintained, with great vigour and ability, that it did not; Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt, and the chief talent of both Houses supporting the same views. Nearly all the lawyers, however, were of an opposite opinion. This circumstance drew from him many sarcastic remarks, especially after one of them had remarked that they were not *at home* in that House, when Mr. Burke said, he believed they were not; "they were birds of a different feather, and only perched in that House on their flight to another—only resting their tender pinions there for a while, yet even fluttering to be gone to the region of coronets; like the Hibernian in the ship, they cared not how soon she foundered, because they were only passengers; their best bower anchor was always cast in the House of Lords." In another sentence he expressed a wish "to see the country governed by law, but not by lawyers." On the 14th of February, when Mr. Erskine, who had already sustained many of his biting sarcasms, complained of the length of the trial, Mr. Burke, after an able defence of the managers upon whom certainly no blame rested in the opinions both of Ministry and Opposition, asked "whether the learned gentleman remembered, that if the trial had continued three years, the oppressions had continued for twenty years? whether, after all, there were hour-glasses for measuring the grievances of mankind? or whether those whose ideas never travelled beyond a *nisi prius* cause, were better calculated to ascertain what ought to be the length of an impeachment, than a rabbit who breeds six times in a year had to judge of the time proper for the gestation of an elephant?" Mr. Fox was equally severe in his strictures upon the legal profession.

The other chief public measures in which Mr. Burke took part were, by an eloquent speech, seconded by Mr. Fox and Mr. Pitt, in support of Mr. Mitford's bill, granting indulgence to protesting Roman Catholic dissenters, or those who denied the Pope's supremacy in temporal matters; on the slave trade; and on the Russian armament.

During the early part of the summer he paid a visit to Margate, for the benefit of the warm salt-water baths for Mrs. Burke, when an anecdote is related indicative of his strict sense of propriety in religious duties. At church, one day, he was unexpectedly saluted with a political sermon, which, though complimentary to his own views of public affairs, was so little suited in his opinion to the place, that he displayed unequivocal symptoms of disapprobation by rising frequently, taking his hat as if to depart, and re-seating himself with evident chagrin. "Surely," said he, on another occasion, "the church is a place where one day's truce may be allowed to the dissensions and animosities of mankind."

Toward the end of August Sir Joshua Reynolds published a print of him, engraved by Benedetti, from his best portrait painted in 1775; underneath it the President caused to be engraved the following lines from the fifth book of Paradise Lost—the conduct of the good Abdiel; a strong allusion, it will be perceived, to the recent quarrel, and expressing his sense of the proceedings of Opposition as well as of their treatment of his friend :—

> "So spake the fervent Angel, but his zeal
> None seconded, as out of season judged,
> Or singular and rash ——————
> —————————————— unmoved,
> Unshaken, unseduced, unterrified ;
> His loyalty he kept, his love, his zeal ;
> Nor number nor example with him wrought
> To swerve from truth, or change his constant mind
> Though single. From amid'st them forth he pass'd,
> Long way through hostile scorn, which he sustain'd
> Superior, nor of violence fear'd aught ;
> And with retorted scorn his back he turn'd
> On those proud towers to swift destruction doom'd."

Mr. Burke, whose humility was as distinguished as any other of his qualities, and who did not see the plate until a considerable number of impressions had been worked off, urged the strongest remonstrances against the application of such lines to him ; and insisted, almost as the condition of continued friendship, that they should be obliterated, or the plate destroyed, as well as all the impressions which had not been distributed. Sir Joshua complied with great reluctance, and very few are now to be found. So far did Mr. Burke carry this feeling, that whenever he met with one of the prints in the house of a friend, he used to beg it as a particular favour, in exchange for one without the lines, and it was no sooner obtained than destroyed.

At this period also it may be remarked, that the war of caricatures which had been carried on against him for many years with some wit and address, as well as against Mr. Fox and others of the Opposition, now turned in some degree in his favour. The Jesuit's dress, by which and by his spectacles he had hitherto been represented by them, was omitted, and he was afterwards commonly drawn as confounding or exposing the apologists of the Revolution. A collection of these sketches, made by an admirer of Mr. Burke and an acquaintance of the writer, affords some amusing scenes at this period of time; the likeness is as faithful as caricature pretends to be, and some of his oratorical attitudes are very correctly caught.

CHAPTER XII.

Writings connected with French Affairs, and the Catholic Claims.—Sir Joshua Reynolds.—Negro Code.—Letter on the death of Mr. Shackleton.—War.—Conduct of the Minority, and policy of the Allies.—Letter to Mr. Murphy.—Preface to Brissot's Address.

In December, 1791, Mr. Burke keeping his eye steadily fixed on the progress of the Revolution, as the great centre of interest to a statesman, drew up a paper, "Thoughts on French Affairs," which was submitted to the private consideration of Ministry, and is marked by the same spirit of fore-knowledge as his other writings on the subject. He arrives at three conclusions of which subsequent experience has taught us the truth—that no counter-revolution in France was to be expected from internal causes only; that the longer the system existed it would become stronger both within and without; and that while it did exist, it would be the interest of the rulers there to disturb and distract all other governments.

The communication to him alluded to from the Empress of Russia, through Count de Woronzow, and Mr. Fawkener the British minister produced in return a dignified and complimentary letter from Mr. Burke, dated from Beaconsfield, November the 1st, insinuating forcibly the necessity for her, adopting, by active exertion as well as declaration, the cause of all Sovereigns, all churches, all nobility and all society; that the debt due by her predecessors to Europe for civilising a vast empire, should now be repaid by that empire to rescue Europe from the new barbarism. An air of doubt, however, pervades this letter, as if he had some suspicion of her zeal; and, if so, the result proved he did not mistake her character, as she did nothing, and probably never meant do any thing, against the revolutionary faction. Catherine, who possessed many of the qualities of a great Monarch, was nevertheless the most selfish of politicians; to crime and selfishness, in fact, she owed her crown; and feeling that no danger to it existed among her own subjects, where the first elements of freedom were unknown, she had not generosity enough to assist others in distress, where there appeared no prospect of immediate profit from the exertion. The purpose of her communication to Mr. Burke was probably to extract from him a letter of admiration and praise, being always ambitious of the notice of the great literary names of Europe; but in returning the courtesy due to a Sovereign and a female, it may be questioned whether he did not inflict some violence on his inclination. Of her private character there could be put one opinion. To the general politics of her court, as evinced toward Turkey and Poland, he was no greater friend, particularly in the business of the partitions of the latter, of which he avowed that honest detestation which every man, not a profligate politician, or a robber by profession, must ever entertain.

The grivances of the Irish Catholics exciting increased discussion in that country, he was solicited to state and support their claims to Ministry, for relaxation of the Penal Laws. His son also was appointed their agent, and early in January, 1792, proceeded to Ireland to influence their proceedings by moderate counsels so as to give effect to his father's exertions here. He carried with him, from his fond parent, the following letter to Lord Charlemont;—

"Beaconsfield, Dec. 29, 1791.

"My dear Lord,

"I have seldom been more vexed than when I found that a visit of mere formality had deprived me of the substantial satisfaction which Mrs. Burke and my brother had in seeing you, as well as they had ever remembered you. Many things, at that time, had contributed to make that loss very great to me. Your Lordship is very good in lamenting the difference which politics had made between Mr. Fox and me. Your condolence was truly kind; for my loss has been truly great in the cessation of the partiality of the man of his wonderful abilities and amiable dispositions. Your Lordship is a little angry at politics that can dissolve friendships. If it should please God to lend me a little longer life, they will not, I hope, cause me to lose the few friends I have left; for I have left all politics, I think, for ever.* Every thing that remains of my relation to the public, will be only in my good wishes, which are warm and sincere, that this constitution should be thoroughly understood, for then I am sure it will be sincerely loved; that its benefits may be widely extended, and lastingly continued; and that no man may have an excuse to wish it to have another fortune than I pray it may long flourish in. I am sure that your country, in whose prosperity I include the most valuable interest of this, will have reason to look back on what you have done for it with gratitude, and will have reason to think the continuance of your health for her further service, amongst the greatest advantages she is likely to expect.

---

* This idea was frequently expressed by Mr. Burke, and for the moment he might possibly intend it; but, in reality, his mind was too active to lie dormant whenever an important question presented for exercising his capacious understanding, and great political knowledge.

"Here is my son, who will deliver this to you. He will be indemnified for what I have lost. I think I may speak for this my other and better self, that he loves you almost as much as I do."

Shortly before this, Mr. Burke had commenced writing, or rather dictating, as he did most of his longer letters and works, his celebrated "Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe, Bart. M. P." as auxiliary to his son's mission in favour of the Catholic claims; it bears date January 3d, 1792, enforces the policy of removing the chief restrictions to which they were subject, particularly that which denied them the elective franchise, and appeals to the recollection of his friend whether his opinions upon the question were not as strong and as fully matured thirty two years before (1760) as at that moment. A bill was speedily introduced into the Irish Parliament by which the profession of the law, before interdicted to Catholics, was opened to them; intermarriages with Protestants legalised; restraints upon education, and obstruction to arts and manufactures in limiting the number of apprentices to masters of that persuasion, removed; and next year they gained the elective franchise.

On the 23d of February died one of his most valued friends, Sir Joshua Reynolds, bequeathing him for the trouble of an executorship, the sum of 2000*l.* and also cancelling a bond for the same amount. This proof of regard was a legacy paid to thirty-five years of close and uninterrupted intimacy, in which most of their friendships, many of their sentiments and feelings, were the same. A rumour has pretty generally prevailed that the President was indebted to the pen of Mr. Burke for the substance of his celebrated lectures on Painting; but of this there is no proof, not even that he corrected them, though this is not improbable. There is, however, little doubt that the artist profited much by the society, and by those unpremeditated yet often brilliant effusions of an original and vigorous mind frequently thrown out by the orator upon art as well as upon general subjects, traces of which have been found in the lectures by some of those staunch literary pointers whom nothing in the shape of coincidence escapes, though they do not detract from the painter's merit. "What the illustrious Scipio was to Lœlius," says Mr. Malone, "the all knowing and all accomplished Burke was to Reynolds." "It is impossible to describe to you," writes Barry from Rome, "what an advantage I had in the acquaintance of Mr. Burke; it was a preparative, and facilitated my relish for the beautiful things of the arts here: and I will affirm from experience, that one gentleman of a literary turn and delicate feelings for the ideal, poetical, and expressive parts of the art, is likely to be of the greatest service to a young artist." Mr. Burke first suggested to Sir Joshua the well known picture of Ugolino; he submitted to him in manuscript the Reflections on the Revolution in France, to which the painter gave the highest praise; he directed the imposing ceremonial of his friend's funeral; but when at the conclusion of the day he attempted to return thanks, in the name of the family, to the Members of the Royal Academy for the attention shown to the remains of their late President, his feelings found vent in tears, but, unable to utter a word, he gave up the attempt after several efforts.*

A character of the deceased, drawn up for the newspapers a few hours after his death, was immediately attributed to Mr. Burke, and has been universally admired for that felicity of thought and elegance of diction rarely equalled by our finest writers, and which, on a topic where he felt any interest, seems ever to have guided his pen.—"It is," says the learned Seward, "the eulogium of Parrhasius pronounced by Pericles—it is the eulogium of the greatest painter by the most consummate orator of his time." Even a virulent enemy terms it "as fine a portrait as Reynolds ever painted."

"His illness was long, but borne with a mild and cheerful fortitude, without the least mixture of any thing irritable or querulous, agreeably to the placid and even tenour of his whole life. He had, from the beginning of his malady, a distinct view of his dissolution; and he contemplated it with that entire composure which nothing but the innocence, integrity, and usefulness of his life, and an unaffected submission to the will of Providence, could bestow. In this situation he had every consolation from family tenderness, which his own kindness to his family had indeed well deserved.

---

* He became guardian to Miss Palmer, Sir Joshua's niece and heiress, who became Marchioness of Thomond. When the marriage articles were brought to be signed, Mr. Burke addressed her in an elegant and impressive speech applicable to her intended change of condition, which, however, agitated her so much as to render her utterly incapable of holding the pen. Every effort was made to calm her, but in vain; all his soothing powers were exerted endearingly and perseveringly without effect; and the party separated for the time unable to accomplish the purpose of their meeting.

"Sir Joshua Reynolds was, on very many accounts, one of the most memorable men of his time. He was the first Englishman who added the praise of the elegant arts to the other glories of his country. In taste, in grace, in facility, in happy invention, and in the richness and harmony of colouring, he was equal to the great masters in the renowned ages. In portrait he went beyond them; for he communicated to that department of the art in which English artists are the most engaged, a variety, a fancy, and a dignity derived from the higher branches, which even those who professed them in a superior manner did not always preserve when they delineated individual nature. His portraits remind the spectator of the invention of history and of the amenity of landscape. In painting portraits he appears not to be raised upon that platform, but to descend to it from a higher sphere. His paintings illustrate his lessons, and his lessons seem to have been derived from his paintings. He possessed the theory as perfectly as the practice of his art. To be such a painter, he was a profound and penetrating philosopher.

"In full happiness of foreign and domestic fame, admired by the expert in art and by the learned in science, courted by the great, caressed by sovereign powers, and celebrated by distinguished poets, his native humility, modesty, and candour never forsook him, even on surprise or provocation; nor was the least degree of arrogance or assumption visible to the most scrutinising eye in any part of his conduct or discourse.

"His talents of every kind—powerful from nature, and not meanly cultivated by letters—his social virtues in all the relations and in all the habitudes of life, rendered him the centre of a very great and unparalleled variety of agreeable societies, which will be dissipated by his death. He had too much merit not to provoke some jealousy, too much innocence to provoke any enmity. The loss of no man of his time can be felt with more sincere, general, and unmixed sorrow.

"Hail! and farewell!"

The legacy bequeathed by Sir Joshua was not a solitary instance of the regard entertained for Mr. Burke by his friends. Dr. Brocklesby accidentally hearing he was pressed by some temporary difficulty, delicately observed that as a slight token of remembrance he had put down his name in his will for 1000*l.* but on considering there would be more pleasure in becoming his own executor, he had resolved to anticipate time and pay the money immediately, and it was paid accordingly.

The question of the Slave trade being discussed in April, Mr. Burke forwarded to Mr. Dundas a "Sketch of a Negro Code," which he had drawn up in 1780, when, as he observes, the abolition, however much to be desired, seeming altogether chimerical, he aimed at carrying into effect the next best remedies—that of subjecting the trade to the strictest possible regulations, and ameliorating the condition of the slaves in the islands. On this project much inquiry, consideration, and labour were expended; it is not a mere draught of a common act of Parliament, but an extensive system, coherent in its parts and bearings, and does honour to the benignant spirit of its author, ever active in the service of suffering humanity.

In Parliament, his chief exertions were in opposing a notice of motion for Parliamentary Reform by Mr. Grey, and the Unitarian petition introduced by Mr. Fox on the 11th of May; an outline of the clever speech on the latter occasion, written after its delivery, has a place in his Works. On the question of the proclamation against seditious doctrines and writings, an obvious schism appeared among Opposition; the *old* Whigs, or Duke of Portland's friends, as distinguished from the *new*, or the followers of Mr. Fox, finding it difficult to adhere to the latter much longer, as well from the dangers of the country increasing, as from the predictions of their former leader, Mr. Burke, becoming day after day verified. In the mean time, Mr. Pitt, from the unexpected opposition of Lord Thurlow in the House of Lords, being obliged to procure his dismissal from the Chancellorship, intimated a desire for a junction with the Portland party, and as, in such a moment of alarm, it was desirable to bring all the talents of the country into its service, he did not object to include Mr. Fox among the number. The latter arrangement was particularly pressed upon the Minister by Mr. Burke, who also pressed the policy of acceding to it upon Mr. Fox through private channels; and the fact is honourable to his candour and patriotism, and even friendship; yet as another specimen of party malevolence, he was frequently accused at the same moment of being that gentleman's personal enemy. Mr. Fox, however, refused to accede to the proposition unless Mr. Pitt resigned the head of the Treasury—a piece of humility not to be expected from him or perhaps from any man situated as he was; the negociation consequently for the present proved fruitless; but the Prince of Wales came forward with a manly avowal in favour of the conduct of Ministers.

All the threatening symptoms of the spring increased during the summer of 1792, by the unprecedented circulation of incendiary pamphlets, by the communication of the clubs of London with those of Paris, which induced several Members of Opposition to secede from such questionable meetings, by the formation of affiliated societies through many of the country towns and even villages, openly advocating Republicanism. In Paris, anarchy became open massacre, followed by the dethronement of the King, the institution of a republic, and encouraged by the repulse of the Duke of Brunswick, with an invitation to other countries to pursue the example. In November, Mr. Burke while at Bath drew up another State Paper, "Heads for Consideration on the Present State of Affairs," distinguished by the same profound sagacity as the others, and sent copies of it to the King, to the Ministers, and to the chief members of the Portland party, as he had done with the "Thoughts" of the preceding year. Its aim is to point out that war is inevitable; that nothing can be done by Austria and Prussia, or any other continental power effectually against France; "that there never was, nor is, nor ever will be, nor ever can be," any decided impression made upon her, of which England is not the directing power, the soul of the confederacy;—with what truth time has shown.

His labours connected with the great convulsion in that country were almost beyond belief, in thinking, in writing, in debating, in corresponding upon it with many of the chief persons in Britain and in Europe, in imparting information, and in diligence in procuring it. For this purpose principally, he had dispatched his son the preceding year, with the knowledge of government, to the French Princes and others assembled at Coblentz, who on his return brought with him to England the famous M. Cazalés, a man of superior talents, distinguished in the National Assembly as the chief opponent of Mirabeau, but who, like most other persons of common sense and common honesty, found it necessary soon after to consult his safety in emigration; and who was further remarkable for bearing so great a resemblance to Mr. Fox, as to have been mistaken for him two or three times in the streets of London. By means of his son, on this trip, Mr. Burke also opened a communication with some of the Ministers of the Emperor of Austria and the King of Prussia, particularly the former, suggesting hints for quieting the disorders of the Netherlands and of Hungary, and alluding to those of France. Some further communications made to Lord Grenville on the latter fertile theme have never been made public.

His further views are stated in the following extract of a letter to his son in Dublin,—"I am now in town trying to take my little part in measures which may quiet the unhappy divisions of the country, and enable us to make head against the common enemy of the human race. To do any good, there ought to be a general cessation, as much as may be, of all public and all private animosities; and first the R——l f——y ought, in my firm opinion, in this question of the very existence of monarchy, as a basis, to be reconciled within itself; the next is, that the Opposition should be reconciled to the Ministry; and that, for that purpose, its dissonant parts should be brought to some agreement if possible—if not, that the well intentioned should be separated from the contagion and distraction attendant upon an apparent connexion with those who, under the false colour of a common party, are as completely separated in views and in opinions as the most adverse and factious ever have been or can be: the last part of the plan is, that there should be a reconciliation between the Catholics and Protestants of Ireland."—In all these plans he succeeded, but in the last the least; either because government could not (on account of the scruples of the King, or perhaps the violent antipathies of the ruling party in Ireland,) or would not, pursue the plan he had chalked out; Mr. Pitt possibly felt some jealousy of appearing to be too much guided by his advice, yet had it been fully followed up by sanctioning the subsequent arrangements of Earl Fitzwilliam, there is a general impression among the best informed men of that country that the rebellion would not have taken place.

In the House of Commons he came into collision with the body that adhered to Mr. Fox on the first day of the session, December 13th, and the two following days in opposing the amendment to the Address moved by that gentleman, and also his motion for sending an Embassador to Paris to treat with the Republic, which met with general reprobation.

Mr. Fox's sentiments, in fact, gave so much offence to some of his warmest friends, that some simply expressed their astonishment, others more openly their dislike; and Lord Sheffield, who it will be remembered was the immediate cause of his rupture with Mr. Burke, went so far as to say that he was ashamed of having ever entertained any enthusiasm for the right honourable mover of such a measure. On the second reading of the Alien Bill, the 28th of the same month, Mr. Burke, in mentioning that an order for making 3000 daggers had arrived some time before at Birmingham, a few of which had been actually delivered, drew one from under his coat, and threw it indignantly on the floor; "*This*," said he, "is what you are to gain by an alliance with France. Wherever their principles are introduced, their practice must also follow." The speech he made on this occasion was excellent in itself, and produced a great effect in the House; the action which accompanied it was not perhaps in such good taste, though well calculated, as he meant it should, to draw universal notice and rouse the most indifferent to a sense of their danger, by a tangible illustration of the results to be expected from tolerating any intercourse with the desperate faction which scourged the people of France. Among those who thought more favourably of that faction this proceeding excited extreme anger, nay execration, as a vile oratorical flourish, while in fact it was meant as a verification of his statement; but the vehemence of the abuse it provoked, only proved the effect it was believed likely to produce in the country. On the Traitorous Correspondence Bill, and on measures connected with the war, he delivered four or five excellent speeches, one of which occasioned an altercation with Mr. Fox. He drew up before the meeting of Parliament an appeal to British charity in favour of the numerous and destitute body of the French clergy then in London.

Shortly before this period, he had lost his early and constant friend Mr. Shackleton, whose occasional visits and letters kept alive that ardour of affection with which the associates of our youth are regarded in every subsequent period of life, and most, perhaps, when from increasing age we are most incapable of relishing new ones. To the letter of Mrs. Leadbeater, announcing the event, he wrote the following reply, dated September 8th, 1792:

"MY DEAR MADAM,

"After some tears on the truly melancholy event of which your letter gives me the first account, I sit down to thank you for your very kind attention to me in a season of so much and so just sorrow to yourself. Certainly my loss is not so great as yours, who constantly enjoyed the advantage and satisfaction of the society of such a companion, such a friend, such an instructor, and such an example: yet I am penetrated with a very sincere affliction; for my loss is great too. I am declining or rather declined in life, and the loss of friends, at no time very reparable, is impossible to be repaired at all in this advanced period. His annual visit had been for some years a source of satisfaction that I cannot easily express. He had kept up the fervour of youthful affections; and his vivacity and cheerfulness, which made his early days so pleasant, continued the same to the last: the strictness of his virtue and piety had nothing in it of morose or austere; and surely no life was better, and (it is a comfort for us to add) more happily spent than his. I knew him from the boyish days in which we began to love each other.

" His talents were great, strong, and various: there was no art or science to which they were not sufficient in the contemplative life; nor any employment that they would not more than adequately fill in the active. Though his talents were not without that ambition which generally accompanies great natural endowments, it was kept under by great wisdom and temperance of mind; and though it was his opinion that the exercise of virtue was more easy, its nature more pure, and its means more certain in the walk he chose, yet in *that* the activity and energy which formed the character of his mind were very visible. Apparently in a private path of life his spirit was public. You know how tender a father he was to children worthy of him by their genius and their virtue; * * * yet he extended himself more widely; and devoted a great part of his time to that society, of no mean extent, of which the order of the Divine Providence had made him a member. With a heart far from excluding others, he was entirely devoted to the benefit of that society, and had a zeal very uncommon for every thing which regarded its welfare and reputation; and when he retired, which he did wisely and in time, from the worthy occupation which he filled in a superior manner, his time and thoughts were given to that object. He sanctified his family benevolence, his benevolence to his society, and to his friends, and to mankind, with reference in all things to that Supreme Being, without which the best dispositions and the best teaching will make virtue, if it can be at all attained, uncertain, poor, hard, dry, cold, and comfortless.

"Indeed we have had a loss. I console myself under it by going over the virtues of my old friend, of which I believe I am one of the earliest witnesses, and the most warm admirers and lovers. Believe me this whole family who have adopted my interest in my excellent departed friend, are deeply touched with our common loss, and sympathize with you most sincerely. My son is just arrived in Dublin. My wife is not very well, and is preparing for a journey to Bath, which I trust will re-establish her. My brother, who will hear this news with a sorrow equal to mine, is now at Cheltenham for the benefit of the waters.—Compose yourself, my dear Madam, you have your work to do. * * * Pray remember me to the gentleman I have not the honour of knowing, but whose happiness you make. Thank for me my worthy friend Abraham for his good-natured letter, and beg him to consider it as answered in this. I hope you will assure my dear friend Mrs. Shackleton, the worthy wife of my late invaluable friend, that we sympathize cordially in all she feels; and join our entreaties to yours that she will preserve to you as much as possible of the friend and parent you have lost."

The war which he had so long predicted as inevitable was now at hand, precipitated perhaps by the opening of the Scheldt, by the promise of assistance from the National Convention to all people who wished to throw off the tyranny of Kings, and particularly by the execution of Louis XVI. Mr. Burke, however, was not pleased with the assignment of the former motive, deeming it weak in comparison with some others. "A war for the Scheldt!" exclaimed he in his forcible phraseology as soon as it was mentioned; "A war for a chamb—r p—t!" War at this moment was in fact no longer matter of choice, being formally declared against England by the Republic on the 1st of February. The propriety and the necessity of it on our part, were already acknowledged by the old Whigs, and thus were separated from Mr. Fox who resisted the war, by a distinct line of political feeling, leaving him not only much reduced in numbers in Parliament, but greatly impaired in moral strength and in political credit.

It must always be matter of surprise to numbers, and of regret to many, how that eminent man could so perseveringly resist and condemn a measure which was in itself unavoidable, and which was supported by the general, and as it proved in the result just, judgment of the country, or how he could have acted otherwise than Mr. Pitt did act, had he himself been Minister. It may be possible, however, that had Mr. Pitt led the Opposition, the spirit so inherent in political rivalry would have induced him to do just as Mr. Fox did; or in other words, that with the difference of men, the results to the country would have been precisely similar. In saying this no reflection is for a moment insinuated against the strict integrity of principle of either; but we are all the creatures of circumstances. It is therefore utterly impossible for the most conscientious statesman that ever lived, to view with the same degree of favour or through the same medium, measures originated by himself, or by those to whom he is politically opposed; to estimate public affairs by the same standard whether he be in, or whether out of power. Had Mr. Fox been in office at this time, his views, his feelings, his prejudices, his judgment, would have differed, along with the difference of his public relations to the government; his anxieties would have been greater, and his apprehensions more easily excited; his penetration more sharp and sensitive by the very weight of his charge; he could scarcely have seen or heard with the same eyes and ears; and all this without any sacrifice of principle. The workings of the mind arising from heavy responsibility, nearer views, better information, and more direct contact with the machinery of the state, and of the real rather than the ostensible grounds of its proceedings, are so imperceptible very often in their operation, that a statesman is often wound gradually round from his former opinions almost without being aware of the change, and is sometimes surprised, and sometimes indignant, when told he is inconsistent. This allowance ought to be made for all public men, though it is one which is generally denied them.

Mr. Pitt, it is perfectly certain, no more than Mr. Fox, had no great appetite for war. His glories had been hitherto peculiarly of the peaceful cast, his popularity was acquired in a state of prosperity and tranquillity. War might destroy, but was not likely to add to them. His interest therefore was to avoid hostilities; and so well did he know this and wish it, that he could not be brought to believe what Mr. Burke had repeatedly told him almost two years before, that war must ultimately ensue. Far from precipitating that event therefore, he pushed it off until the last moment.

How Mr. Fox, placed in the same situation, could have avoided the storm, it is impossible to conjecture. He was above all state quackery, and never professed to have discovered any infallible nostrum by which to subject raging political madmen, whether at home or abroad, to the dominion of quiet and reason. He was indeed in many respects an easy man, a friendly man, an illustrious man, with great capacity of head, and much of the milk of human kindness in his heart, but the foreign race of revolutionists showed no particular attention to individual character except in cutting off the heads of those who enjoyed it, and there is no reason to believe their disciples here would have been more merciful; the sentence would have been pronounced the moment he interfered with their system of confusion, having first perhaps made him their dupe.

Admitting, however, that his vigilance on this point was greater than he avowed, it is not improbable that, as Minister at this moment, he might have parleyed a little longer with the Republic; he might have withheld some of our reasonable demands; he might have, for the forlorn hope of peace, overlooked slighter affronts; he might still have tolerated the revolution, and constitutional and corresponding societies, and their innumerable affiliations; he might have submitted some time longer to daily importations of the emissaries and principles of anarchy; but as the demands on his patience rose, so even his concessions must have had an end. With all his partialities to popular license, he must have discovered to what these abuses of it tended. He could not have trifled with the quick discernment of the late King, whose decision in moments of alarm has never perhaps been rated at its due value. He could not have resisted the deliberate conviction of his co-adjutors in office, and especially of the great Whig families, the supporters and partners of his fame for so many years; and least of all, could he have withstood, as Minister, the intuitive sagacity, the clear views, and conclusive reasonings of Mr. Burke; though as leader of Opposition his pride shrunk from acquiescing in any thing which implied tacit deference to the measures of Mr. Pitt. That war would therefore have ensued, had even he been at the helm, it is impossible to doubt; that he would have conducted it differently may be probable; that it would have been better conducted is at best but matter of opinion. But there is some ground to fear that it might have been delayed till the enemy had gained more ground and more proselytes, till the situation of the allied powers had become more precarious, till the throne and the constitution were beginning to totter under outrageous assaults, and consequently till our means of defence had been weakened.

It was about this time that the propriety of Mr. Fox's politics becoming generally questioned, he thought it necessary to publish a defence of them in a letter to the electors of Westminster, followed by a resolution of the Whig Club, moved by Lord William Russel—that their confidence in Mr. Fox was confirmed, strengthened, and *increased* by the calumnies against him. As this was evidently levelled at the exceptions to his Parliamentary conduct taken by Mr. Burke, Mr. Windham, Sir Gilbert Elliott, Dr. Laurence, and others, they immediately withdrew their names from the Club; and as the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam seemed to concur in the resolution, Mr. Burke, in justification of his own and his friends' censures, addressed to the former, as head of the party, the famous "Observations on the Conduct of the Minority." It details, under fifty-four heads, a very strong and perhaps unanswerable case against Mr. Fox. It was transmitted to the Duke as a confidential communication, sealed up, and not to be opened by him till a disconnexion of interests with that gentleman should take place, which the writer, with characteristic sagacity, pronounced to be finally inevitable. So far, therefore, from being intended to *produce* a rupture between the Duke and Mr. Fox, it was only to be perused *consequent* upon such an event occurring from other causes. His own words, in the letter accompanying it are, "I now make it my humble request to your Grace, that you will not give any sort of answer to the paper I send, or to this letter, except barely to let me know that you have received them. I even wish that at present you may not read the paper which I transmit; lock it up in the drawer of your library table, and when a day of compulsory reflection comes, then be pleased to turn to it. Then remember that your Grace had a true friend, who had, comparatively with men of your description, a very small interest in opposing the modern system of morality and policy; but who under every discouragement was faithful to public duty and to private friendship. I shall then probably be dead. I am sure I do not wish to live to see such things; but whilst I do live, I shall pursue the same course." Communicated thus in confidence, this paper might probably have remained for ever, or for a long time at least, unknown to the world, but for scandalous breach of confidence in Mr. Burke's amanuensis, an equally ungrateful and unprincipled man, who kept a copy, and surreptitiously printed it in the early part of 1797, under the invidious title of "Fifty four Articles of Impeachment against the Right Hon. C. J. Fox."—Mr. Burke being then confined to his bed, at Bath, his friends obtained an injunction from the Chancellor, but too late to prevent its circulation; he disclaimed, he said, in a letter written to Dr. Lawrence at the moment, not one of the sentiments, but simply the act and intention of publication.

After the declaration of war, his Parliamentary exertions were principally confined to questions connected with the internal tranquillity of the country, and the precautionary measures adopted against secret intercourse with France. Another disquisition on the affairs of the Catholics, which appears in his works without date, addressed to his son, is believed to have been drawn up about this period, or shortly before. During the summer, they both accompanied the Duke of Portland to Oxford, on his formal installation as Chancellor of the University (Mr. Burke having also attended his Grace in the preceding October, on a private ceremony of the same purport at Bulstrode,) when his son, along with Mr. Windham and others, received the honorary degree of LL.D., and the father very marked attention from the heads of that establishment. He resided chiefly with Mr. Winstanley, Principal of Alban Hall, and Camden Professor of Ancient History, who bears this strong testimony to his guest's talents as a philologer. "Those who are acquainted with the universality of his information will not be surprised to hear that it would be exceedingly difficult to meet with a person who knows more of the philosophy, the history, and filiation of languages, or of the principles of etymological deduction, than Mr. Burke." His society indeed proved a treat to all persons of intellectual superiority: Gibbon, who had just arrived from Switzerland after some years' absence, sought him out immediately, and writes at this time twice in his letters, "I spent a delightful day with Burke." As a mark of respect for his unwearied labours in the public cause, events of importance were occasionally communicated to him by special messengers as to a cabinet minister. When the news of the capture of Valenciennes arrived, an immediate communication from Mr. Dundas found him at the little theatre of Charlefont a few miles from Beaconsfield, when he interrupted the performance, read the contents aloud, pointing out the importance of the conquest, and giving the humble orchestra some money for drink, ordered them to play *God save the King*, which was accompanied by the audience in chorus.

Though a warm supporter of the war, as the only means of saving the country, he differed frequently with Ministry on the details; the mode of carrying it on was scarcely ever to his satisfaction, and looking only to the results, his objections would seem to have been well grounded.

One of the chief papers on the subject was "Remarks on the Policy of the Allies," written about November 1793, a passage of which displays such an instinctive knowledge of France and of Frenchmen, that the cause of the ill success of the Bourbons in conciliating the public mind of that country in 1814, will become immediately obvious, while it exhibits another instance of the sagacity which could teach that family, twenty-one years before the event, the only mode of *securing* their kingdom in case they should again acquire it. "Whoever claims a right by birth to govern there, must find in his breast, or conjure up in it, an energy not to be expected, not always to be wished for, in well ordered states. The lawful prince must have in every thing but crime the character of an usurper. He is gone if he imagines himself the quiet possessor of a throne. He is to contend for it as much after an apparent conquest as before. His task is to win it; he must leave posterity to enjoy and to adorn it. No velvet cushions for him. He is to be always (I speak nearly to the letter) on horseback. This opinion is the result of much patient thinking on the subject, which I conceive no event is likely to alter." The declaration or manifesto of the British government of October 29th, he did not approve, or at least thought the time chosen for its promulgation inapplicable and imprudent, from the successes of the enemy, and the reverses of our own arms.

The dedication of his translation of Tacitus, by Mr. Murphy, drew two letters from Mr. Burke of mingled acknowledgments and criticism; the one from Duke-street, May 26, 1793, the other from Beaconsfield, in December of the same year. In the former he says, "I thank you for the partial light in which you regard my weak endeavours for the conservation of that ancient order of things in which we were born, and in which we have lived neither unhappily nor disgracefully, and (you at least) not unprofitably to your country. As to me, in truth I can claim nothing more than good intention in the part I have to act. Since I am publicly placed (however little suitably so to my abilities or inclination,) I have struggled to the best of my power against two great *Public Evils*, growing out of the most sacred of all things, Liberty and Authority. In the writings which you are so indulgent as to bear, I have struggled against the Tyranny of Freedom; in this my longest and last struggle (the impeachment, to which he had alluded in the foregoing part of the letter) I contend against the Licentiousness of Power. When I retire from this, successful or defeated, your work will either add to my satisfaction or furnish me with comfort. *Securiorem et uberiorem, materiam senectuti seposui.*"

The second letter is interesting for the literary criticism which it contains.

"I have read the first book through, besides dipping here and there into other parts. I am extremely delighted with it. You have done what hitherto I think has not been done in England; you have given us a translation of a Latin prose writer, which may be read with pleasure. It would be no compliment at all to prefer your translation to the last, which appeared with such a pomp of patronage. Gordon was an author fashionable in his time, but he never wrote any thing worthy of much notice but that work, by which he has obtained a kind of eminence in bad writing, so that one cannot pass it by with mere neglect. It is clear to me that he did not understand the language from which he ventured to translate; and that he had formed a very whimsical idea of excellence with regard to ours. His work is wholly remote from the genius of the tongue in its purity, or in any of its jargons. It is not English nor Irish, nor even his native Scotch. It is not fish nor flesh, nor good red-herring: yours is written with facility and spirit, and you do not often depart from the genuine native idiom of the language. Without attempting, therefore, to modernise terms of art, or to disguise ancient customs under new habits, you have contrived things in such a manner that your readers will find themselves at home. The other translations do not familiarise you with ancient Rome, they carry you into a new world. By their uncouth modes of expression they prevent you from taking an interest in any of its concerns. In spite of you they turn your mind from the subject, to attend, with disgust, to their unskilful manner of treating it; from such authors we can learn nothing.

"I have always thought the world much obliged to good translators like you. Such are some of the French. They who understand the original, are not those who are under the smallest obligations to you; it is a great satisfaction to see the sense of one good author in the language of another. He is thus *alias et idem*. Seeing your author in a new point of view, you become better acquainted with him; his thoughts make a new and deeper impression on the mind. I have always recommended it to young men in their studies, that when they had made themselves thorough masters of a work in the original, then (but not till then) to read it in a translation, if in any modern language a readable translation was to be found. What I say of your translation is really no more than very cold justice to my sentiments of your great undertaking. I never expected to see so good a translation. I do not pretend that it is wholly free from faults, but at the same time I think it more easy to discover them than to correct them. There is a style which daily gains ground amongst us, which I should be sorry to see further advanced by the authority of a writer of your just reputation. The tendency of the mode to which I allude, is to establish two very different idioms amongst us, and to introduce a marked distinction between the English that is written, and the English that is spoken. This practice, if grown a little more general, would confirm this distemper, such I must think it, in our language, and perhaps render it incurable.

"From this feigned manner of *falsetto*, as I think the musicians call something of the same sort in singing, no one modern historian, Robertson only excepted, is perfectly free. It is assumed, I know, to give dignity and variety to the style; but whatever success the attempt may sometimes have, it is always obtained at the expense of purity and of the graces that are natural and appropriate to our language. It is true that when the exigence calls for auxiliaries of all sorts, and common language becomes unequal to the demands of extraordinary thoughts, something ought to be conceded to the necessities which make "ambition virtue;" but the allowances to necessities ought not to grow into a practice. Those portents and prodigies ought not to grow too common. If you have here and there (much more rarely however than others of great and not unmerited fame) fallen into an error, which is not that of the dull or careless, you have an author who is himself guilty in his own tongue of the same fault in a very high degree. No author thinks more deeply, or paints more strongly, but he seldom or never expresses himself naturally. It is plain that comparing him with Plautus and Terence, or the beautiful fragments of Publius Syrus, he did not write the language of good conversation. Cicero is much nearer to it. Tacitus, and the writers of his time, have fallen into that vice by aiming at a poetical style. It is true that eloquence in both modes of rhetoric is fundamentally the same; but the manner of handling is totally different, even where words and phrases may be transferred from the one of these departments of writing to the other."

Early in February, 1794, the affections of Mr. Burke received a severe shock in the death of his brother Richard, with whom, and indeed with all his relatives, he had ever lived in a degree of harmony and affection rarely witnessed in the most united families. There was but little difference in their ages. They had started nearly at the same time, and under circumstances nearly similar, though with very different capacities, to work up the hill of life together; and whenever the weaker powers of the younger caused him to lag behind, the hand of the elder was immediately extended to aid him on the journey. For many years they had but one purse and one house, and many of their friendships and pursuits were in common. The talents of Richard, though bearing no comparison with those of his brother, were much above mediocrity, and would have placed him high in any sphere of life, had not a constitutional vivacity and love of pleasure rendered him impatient of application: he wrote extremely well, but wanted industry. Lord Mansfield, who had formed a high opinion of his powers, pronounced him a rising man at the bar; but an inclination to politics, and the acceptance of the situation of one of the secretaries to the Treasury, in 1783, injured his prospects as a lawyer, though, through the interest of his brother, he became afterwards Recorder of Bristol, and one of the counsel on the trial of Mr. Hastings. His person was good; his features handsome; his manners prepossessing; which, with his wit and humour, gave him a ready introduction to the fashionable society of the metropolis, where Goldsmith has described him as

> "Now breaking a jest, and now breaking a limb."

Mr. Burke took little share in Parliamentary business till the session was pretty far advanced, and then chiefly by speaking in favour of voluntary subscriptions and the enrolment of troops; of permitting foreigners to enlist in the British army; of detaining persons suspected of designs against the government; opposing, as he had always done, even when an economical reformer, the violent amputation of places and pensions bestowed as the rewards of service; and the address for the liberation of La Fayette, who having neither talents nor influence to guide the storm he had so diligently laboured to raise in France, fled himself from the destruction, the bloodshed, and massacre in which he had involved so many thousands of unoffending persons and families, and being seized in his flight, was imprisoned by order of the Emperor of Germany. In the debate on the Volunteer Bill, some squibbing took place with Mr. Sheridan; Mr. Burke observed, that long speeches without good materials were dangerous, quoting some popular doggrel of the American war—

> "Solid men of Boston, banish strong potations;
> "Solid men of Boston, make no long orations.
> "Bow, wow, wow."

When the wit fancying that the first line of the couplet, if not the second, applied rather too forcibly to him, keenly retorted by saying that he remembered some other lines from the same approved author—

> "Now it hapt to the country he went for a blessing,
> And from his state daddy to get a new lesson;
> He went to daddy Jenky, by trimmer Hal attended,
> In such company, good lack! how his morals must be mended,
> "Bow, wow, wow,"

To a translation made about this time by Mr. William Bourke, of "Brissot's Address to his constituents," Mr. Burke, though without his name, gave a masterly preface, which excited general notice, sketching a concise but powerful history of the Brissotin or Girondist faction, its principles and progress till overwhelmed and guillotined by that of Robespierre or the Mountain. The preface produced a considerable demand for the book.

CHAPTER XIII.

Junction of the Old Whigs with Ministry.—Mr. Burke loses his Son, and excessive Grief.—Letters to W. Smith, Esq., to Sir Hercules Langrishe (2d) to W. Elliott, Esq.—Thoughts on Scarcity.—Receives a Pension.—Letter to a Noble Lord.—Letters on a Regicide Peace.

IMMEDIATELY after the conclusion of the session in July, 1794, the junction of the Portland party with Ministry, which previously existed in fact, took place in form by the Duke receiving a blue ribband, the office of third Secretary of State, with the management of Ireland; Earl Fitzwilliam becoming President of the Council first, and then Lord Lieutenant of that country, Earl Spencer Lord Privy Seal, and soon after First Lord of the Admiralty, and Mr. Windham Secretary at War; Lord Loughborough was already Lord Chancellor. This union, which was effected by Mr. Burke, from a conviction of its being intimately connected with the safety of the country, was represented by some of the more inconsiderate friends of Mr. Fox as a wanton desertion of him, and as the same story is occasionally repeated even now, the accuracy of the statement may be examined in a few words.

On being dismissed from his connexion with Ministry, by a contemptuous note from Lord North, in 1774, Mr. Fox, as might be expected, joined the Opposition particularly, indirectly at least, that division of it of which the Marquis of Rockingham was the head, and Mr. Burke the efficient leader and soul in the House of Commons. His admiration of the latter, which even at this time was unreserved, as well perhaps as a family disinclination to range himself under the banners of his father's former adversary, Lord Chatham, who led the other branch of the Minority, might have strengthened this determination; but, in addition to it, the Rockingham party contained by far the greater portion of talents, and of numbers, in its general principles he professed his warm acquiescence, and it promised the readiest road to power. A direct junction with it was therefore the only step which an ambitious man, in furtherance of his own views, could well take. Mr. Burke, in a most friendly, and indeed affectionate letter already alluded to, written to him to Ireland, in October 1777, and beginning *My dear Charles*, instead of attempting to bias his conduct by undue persuasion, expressly says, "Do not be in haste. Lay your foundations deep in public opinion. Though (as you are sensible) I have never given you the least hint of advice about joining yourself in a declared connexion with our party, nor do I now; yet, as I love that party very well, and am clear that you are better able to serve them than any man I know; I wish that things should be so kept as to leave you mutually very open to one another in all changes and contingencies; and I wish this the rather, because in order to be very great, as I am anxious you should be (always presuming that you are disposed to make a good use of power,) you will certainly want some better support than merely that of the crown."* The choice of his associates was therefore voluntarily, no doubt wisely, and at least deliberately made by Mr. Fox. He acceded to the Rockingham party in form; he dissented from it in no matter of moment, on the contrary acknowledging after the death of the Marquis, the Duke of Portland and Earl Fitzwilliam as the new heads of the connexion, and consulting them on all public measures of interest, with the deference due to rank and public weight in the country until the occurrence of the French Revolution, when his views either changed, or at least when the change became obvious to his coadjutors.

By this time, however, he had formed a considerable party of his own. He had gathered around him a number of ingenious and able men, many of them young, some of them almost grown up under his eye in Parliament, who, attracted by the splendour of his talents and reputation, eagerly sought his friendship, embraced his opinions, and who, disregarding, or not acknowledging any other influence, looked to him alone as their leader. In return for this distinction, he probably found it necessary to accommodate some of his opinions to theirs; and the eventful scenes passing in France being well calculated to engage in their favour the ardent feelings of these friends as well as his own to a considerable degree, added to the hope of strong popular support, their re-action upon each other probably produced that degree of heat in the cause, and dissent from his more ancient connexions which had hitherto been evident only on the single question of parliamentary reform. It was also urged by his adherents, that his views and principles on public affairs were more on a level with the free and enlightened spirit of the age than those of Mr. Burke, who was represented as fettered by old systems and prejudices, and too strong an adherence to the notions of the aristocracy in matters of government.

---

* Burke's Works, vol. ix. 8vo. ed. p. 156.

Whatever be the cause, just at the critical moment in question, Mr. Fox appeared to push to excess in theory, and seeming approval in practice, doctrines which the Old Whigs, as well as others, conceived to be at variance with sound discretion. "In my journey with them through life," said Mr. Burke, "I met Mr. Fox in my road, and I travelled with him very cheerfully as long as he appeared to me to pursue the same direction with those in whose company I set out. In the latter stage of our progress a new scheme of liberty and equality was produced in the world, which either dazzled his imagination, or was suited to some new walks of ambition which were then opened to his view. The whole frame and fashion of his politics appeared to have suffered about that time a very material alteration." At this period he withdrew his political allegiance from the acknowledged heads of the party, who were no longer consulted on any of his measures, and in Parliament he treated with asperity and ridicule their opinions and their fears for the public safety. Still, with the exception of Mr. Burke and a few others, the majority were unwilling to come to a rupture; they were loth to quit him, and yet knew not how, with propriety or satisfaction to themselves, to continue to act with him; and it was not one of the least curious anomalies of the time to hear many who gave him their votes and general support in the House, condemn their own votes and all his proceedings in detail, the moment they quitted it. The general belief was that time and experience would produce an alteration of sentiments, as the crimes of the revolutionists became developed; a few of his friends have even lately expressed an opinion that but for the heat on both sides, with which the rupture between him and Mr. Burke was attended, the latter would have wound him round to his views; and it is certain that up to the session of 1792—1793, the latter himself said he did not consider their breach irreparable, and he had just before in the summer of 1792, as already noticed, laboured with much diligence to induce him, along with the rest of the Portland party, to join the Ministry in a period of such national peril. More than three years' experience, however, convinced the whole of that body that his co-operation was not to be expected; the junction, as already stated, therefore took place, but the deliberate consideration that preceded, and the pecuniary arrangements which attended it, so far as he was concerned, left him without the slightest cause for complaint. It was illiberal, therefore, and inconsistent on the part of his partizans to accuse them of deserting *him;* he, on the contrary, might be more truly said to have deserted *them;* they were the head of the connexion, to their system he had acceded, and if he found cause to dissent from the general principles which they had always hitherto acknowledged, the difference could not be justly laid to their charge.

The conduct of this body indeed at the moment displayed any thing rather than undue eagerness for power. The first determination of the Duke of Portland and Mr. Windham was *not* to accept of office, believing that more support might be given to government by an open and uninfluenced vote in Parliament than by becoming officially connected with it—a disinterested and patriotic idea certainly, but not perhaps a very sound conclusion in the business of governing a kingdom. Mr. Burke soon taught them, and was well enabled to teach them, better; for long and hardly earned experience had satisfied him, in his own case if in no other, how comparatively useless are the most splendid talents and the best intentions without the possession of power to give them effect. It is to his honour, that the handsome annuity settled by the party on Mr. Fox previous to their final separation, met with his warm approval.

A calamity now overtook Mr. Burke of the most grievous as well as unexpected description, which all his religion and philosophy were exerted in vain to surmount. This was the death of his son Mr. Richard Burke, on the 2d of August, 1794, at the early age of 36. His health, though for some time in an unsettled state, was so far from being a source of apprehension to the fond father, that he was looking forward with anxiety to the moment when, by his own retirement from Parliament, he should be able to give him that opportunity for taking part in public affairs to which he thought his talents in every way equal. For this purpose he had just relinquished to him (the manager's share in the trial of Mr. Hastings having finished) his seat for Malton. He was further gratified by having him appointed Secretary to his friend Earl Fitzwilliam, the new Viceroy of Ireland; and at a dinner given about this time to several friends, the father, wholly unconscious of the impending danger, was anticipating for him a brilliant career of service in that country, though the guests viewed his hectic and disordered countenance with very different emotions. None of these, however intimate, ventured to express their fears. Neither did the physicians think it prudent to alarm him by premature disclosure, in case of the disease, which was judged to be a decline, proving gradual and lingering; Dr. Brocklesby giving it as his opinion, from perfect acquaintance with the strong paternal affection and sensitive feelings of Mr. Burke, that a knowledge of the real nature of the disease and of the danger would probably prove fatal to him sooner than to his son. Cromwell House at Brompton was, however, taken for him by their advice, to be in the air, and yet near to town preparatory to his journey to Ireland. Here he became rapidly worse; and concealment being longer impossible, the melancholy truth was at length communicated, just a week before the fatal event occurred, to the father; who, from this time till the fate of his offspring was decided, slept not, scarcely tasted food, or ceased from the most affecting lamentations, seeming to justify the prediction of the physician, that had it been communicated to him sooner his own death might have been the result.

In the closing scene itself there were some circumstances sufficiently affecting. The poor sufferer passed the night preceding his dissolution in a very restless and agitated state, though resigned to that decree which was so soon to separate him from the world; but in the morning, hearing the loud lamentations of his parents in an adjoining room, and anxious as far as in his power to relieve their agony by seeming better than he really was, he rose with some assistance, and leaning on the arm of the faithful housekeeper (Mrs. Webster) and her husband proceeded to the door of the room in which they were sitting, desiring his supporters to quit him before they came within sight of his father and mother—a kind of affectionate imposition meant to impress them with a belief of his gaining strength. He even made a vigorous effort to tread the room with a firm step, walking across it to the window and thence towards where they sate in the deepest distress viewing him with intense anxiety, but unable to utter a word. To some efforts which he made to console them, excessive grief still prevented any reply; —"Speak to me, my dear father," said he, in a pathetic tone, "speak to me of religion, speak to me of morality, speak to me of indifferent matters, for I derive much satisfaction from what you say." Shortly afterwards hearing some noise without doors, he inquired whether it was rain, adding immediately, no; it is but the wind whistling through the trees, and then repeated in a solemn manner three lines from Adam's hymn to the morning, which had been favourites with his uncle Richard, and were repeated by him more than once just before his death:

"His praise, ye winds, that from four quarters blow,
Breathe soft or loud; and wave your tops ye pines,
With every plant, in sign of worship wave."

He repeated them a second time with increased solemnity, and had scarcely finished the concluding word of the passage, when the hand of death smote him, and staggering into the arms of his father, was carried in a state of insensibility to bed, where shortly afterwards without reviving he breathed his last.

The grief of this most fond and most affectionate of fathers afforded perhaps one of the most heart rending scenes ever witnessed. in real life, or conceived by the strongest imagination, or described by the pen of fiction; for it was, as an eye witness and friend of the family used to say, "truly terrific." His bursts of affliction were of fearful force, so overwhelming indeed as to fright and almost to paralyse those who were around him. For a moment he would be calm, but it was the calm of unutterable despair, when suddenly a whirlwind of agony arising in his mind, he would burst from all control, rush into the chamber where his dead son was laid, and dash himself with violence, as it happened, on the bed, or on the lifeless body, or on the floor, calling in the most affecting exclamations, for the hope of his age, the stay of his life, the only comfort of his declining and now joyless years. —It would be difficult to convey an adequate idea of this scene, which was frequently repeated during the first day, and exhibited the very desperation of grief; but a promise was then exacted from him, which he kept, not again to go into the room where the corpse remained. At other moments he would rally his mind and express his submission to the will of Providence, employing himself in little offices such as the deceased used to do, or which he thought would be agreeable to him if alive. Again he would attempt to console Mrs. Burke, whose distraction of mind, not less deep, though less violent than his own, would admit of no alleviation but frequent and alarming bursts of tears, regretting in the intervals that a slight hurt she had received a few days previously had not terminated in her own death sooner than live to witness the extinction of all her hopes. Her husband frequently wished her to quit the melancholy scene, but she repeatedly refused; "No, Edmund," was the reply, "as long as he remains here, I'll remain here;" at length, however, giving way to the persuasions of several friends, she unwillingly quitted the house previous to the funeral.

The son thus deeply lamented had always conducted himself with so much filial duty and affection towards both parents, and more especially in soothing the unavoidable irritations to which his father was subjected by incessant occupation in public affairs, as to sharpen the natural feelings of sorrow of the parent, by reflecting that he had also lost a counsellor and friend. Their confidence on all subjects was even more unreserved than commonly prevails between father and son, and their esteem for each other higher. The son looked to the father as one of the first, if not the very first, character in history; the father had formed the very highest opinion of the talents of the son, and among his friends rated them superior to his own;* he had enlarged the house at Beaconsfield for his particular pursuits and accommodation, he consulted him for some years before his death on almost every subject whether of a public or private nature that occurred, and very often followed his judgment in preference to his own where they happened to differ; he possessed lively parts, much knowledge, and firmness and decision of mind.

The loss of such a companion and confidant, the unexpected and irremediable destruction of the hopes entertained of his advancement and fame, and as the only remaining child, the consequent extinction of the hopes of descendants to continue his name, was naturally felt with excessive poignancy. It shook his frame indeed to its centre, and though without the slightest effect on his intellectual energies, his bodily powers rapidly declined. He never afterwards could bear to look towards Beaconsfield Church, the place of his interment; nor was he perhaps for any length of time ever absent from his mind except when engaged in literary composition, which therefore became rather a relief than a labour. The late Bishop of Meath (O'Beirne) used to say that the first time he had an opportunity of seeing him after the melancholy event, he was shocked to observe the change which it had produced in his appearance; his countenance displayed traces of decay and of mental anguish, his chest was obviously much sunk, and altogether exhibited the appearance of one bowed down both in frame and in spirit by affliction.

---

* "Mr. Bennet Langton told the Countess of Waldegrave, that in a conversation one day with Mr. Burke, he uttered this sentiment: 'How extraordinary it is, that I, and Lord Chatham, and Lord Holland should each have a son so superior to ourselves!'"
Miss Hawkins's Memoirs.

Nearly all his private letters and publications written after this time contain many and pathetic allusions to his loss, and in his conversation they were still more frequent. He called him "the hope of his house," "the prop of his age," "his other and better self." Writing to a relation on the birth of a son, he said, "may he live to be the staff of your age and close your eyes in peace, instead of, like me, reversing the order of nature and having the melancholy office to close *his*." To Mr. (now Baron) Smith he writes: "So heavy a calamity has fallen upon me as to disable me for business and to disqualify me for repose. The existence I have I do not know that I can call life * * Good nights to you—I never can have any." To Sir Hercules Langrishe he talks of the remainder of his "short and cheerless existence in this world." In a letter to Lord Auckland, he says, "For myself or for my family (alas! I have none) I have nothing to hope or to fear in this world." The *Letter to* *a noble Lord* speaks of "the sorrows of a desolate old man." And again, "The storm has gone over me; and I lye like one of those old oaks which the late hurricane has scattered about me. I am stripped of all my honours; I am torn up by the roots and lye prostrate on the earth." "I am alone. I have none to meet my enemies in the gate. I greatly deceive myself if in this hard season of life I would give a peck of refuse wheat for all that is called fame and honour in the world;" and numberless others scattered through his subsequent writings. It was a matter of the least consideration that except for this heavy affliction Mr. Burke was to have been raised to the honours of the peerage, but infirm, childless, and desponding, every feeling of ambition became now extinguished as the preceding expression plainly intimates. Notwithstanding this, perhaps, it should have been bestowed and accepted; it would have been a satisfaction, if not to himself, at least to his friends and to his admirers, as a testimony of national gratitude to a man of such extraordinary and varied talents, exerted with extraordinary vigour in every department of the public service; and as a passport to the greater favour and consideration of that numerous class of the community (and those too not of the least rank or influence,) who would estimate at a very different value the exertions and services of plain Mr. Burke, and those of Lord Burke, or Lord Beaconsfield.

In person, young Burke was not so tall or so muscular as his father, but well formed and active, his features smaller and more delicate, though handsome and expressive, supposed to bear some resemblance to those of his uncle Richard, and his complexion florid. A picture of him by Sir Joshua Roynolds is an admirable likeness, "as exact," said a literary lady, a friend of the family, who saw it at the painter's before it was sent home, "as the reflexion of a mirror." From this portrait his father, soon after his death, caused a print to be engraved, which preserves much of the spirit of the original. Underneath it, after his name, age, and the date of his death, are the following lines, altered in a slight degree from Dryden's elegiac poem of Eleonora—

> "As precious gums are not for common fire,
> They but perfume the temple and expire;
> So was he soon exhaled and vanish'd hence,
> A short sweet odour at a vast expense."

Adding to these, as at once characteristic of his grief, and his pride,

> "O dolor atque decus."

For some time after this loss, Mr. Burke was too much hurt by it to take any very active interest in any thing else, nor did his friends think it decorous to intrude upon his sorrows by solicitations for his opinions on public affairs; but as these from long habit had become a species of daily aliment to his mind, they were now a relief to it by serving to dispel more melancholy thoughts. His communications with Ministry, however, from this time ceased, and his influence thenceforward was wholly public. One of the first fruits of the renewed vigour of his pen was the *Letter to Baron Smith*, dated January 29th, 1795, in reply to one from that gentleman on the Roman Catholic question, which being handed about in Dublin, at length found its way to the press, though without permission of the writer or of his correspondent. In this he pleads for the removal of all the disabilities of that body, and in speaking of the religion itself uses the language of men of sense and of statesmen—that as the faith of fourfifths of the community of the country, it should not be hostilely treated—that as a thing irremovable, it is the business of wisdom to make the most of it—"that it ought to be cherished as a good (though not as the most preferable good if a choice was now to be made,) and not tolerated as an inevitable evil." He urges with force that their exclusion from Parliament which confers no power is useless, and merely a stigma and reproach, while they are admitted to the possession of substantial power in elections, in the army, in the navy, the professions, and civil offices—that a Clerk of Parliament, to which they may be eligible, has really more power, so far as power is concerned, than nine-tenths of the Members of the House, to which they were not eligible to aspire.

A second *Letter to Sir Hercules Langrishe*, alluding to an able speech upon the same subject made by that gentleman in the Irish House of Commons, followed, in the month of May of the same year. This had been scarcely dispatched to its destination, when he had to turn round and defend himself from an attack of the Duke of Norfolk in the House of Lords, accusing him, in the usual strain of the Minority, of turning the powerful batteries of his tongue and his pen against Whig principles, against the constitution, and against freedom. The reply, in a *Letter to William Elliott, Esq.* is couched in a strain of irony and sarcastic humour. He confesses that he is somewhat incorrigible—somewhat purblind to the blessings of French freedom;—that he must nevertheless continue in the way he set out, that is, to try and save his Grace, and persons like his Grace, from themselves. —"I admit indeed that my praises of the British government, loaded with all its incumbrances; clogged with its Peers and its beef; its parsons and its pudding; its Commons and its beer; and its dull slavish liberty of going about just as one pleases, had something to provoke a 'jockey of Norfolk' who was inspired with the resolute ambition of becoming a citizen of France."

In October, he received a friendly letter from Lord Auckland, remarking that though it had seldom been their lot to sail through the ocean of politics on the same tack, their destination was the same—the public good; and on his part always accompanied by the most friendly and respectful sentiments towards him, under which influence he begged to inclose his pamphlet just then published, "Remarks on the apparent Circumstances of the War in the fourth week of October, 1795." The reply of Mr. Burke displayed an equal degree of courtesy; but though both engaged in support of government, their views of public policy and the situation of the country were as diametrically opposite as they ever had been on the American contest. Which proved again the more correct, it is scarcely necessary to say. The main purpose of the pamphlet was to recommend peace with France, and to insinuate that the time was favourable to the design, both which propositions are refuted by Mr. Burke, with much vigour of reasoning and some sarcastic humour, in the "Fourth Letter on a regicide Peace," addressed at the moment to Earl Fitzwilliam, though only published among his posthumous Works.

Considerable distress arising from the dearness of provisions at this season, and many remedial schemes proposed in consequence, he addressed to Mr. Pitt, in November of the same year, "Thoughts and Details on Scarcity." These are of permanent interest from their acquaintance with rural affairs, and their practical exposition of the connexion existing between farmer and labourer, which he had found time to note down amid so much political meditation and contention; quite enough, it might be supposed, to occupy any one man's life without attending to the minute details of agriculture. He explodes the idea then abroad of settling a fixed price for labour, or of establishing public granaries. The half-jocular, half serious apology for the use of spirituous liquors in contradiction to the declamation of common-place moralists and philosophers, is another instance of his attention to facts and to the actual state and desires of the bulk of mankind, who, he justly observes, ever have and ever will, use this or something similar to it in effect; "Whether the thunder of the laws," says he, "or the thunder of eloquence, 'is hurled on *gin*,' always I am thunder-proof."

Few things indeed which concerned the business, the well-being, or the wants of men generally, or of those more immediately around him, escaped his diligent research. He surprised a distinguished literary and political character who about this period paid him a visit at Beaconsfield, by entering into a history of the progress of farming, of improvements, of rents, taxes, and the variations in the poor's rates of fifty parishes in the county during several consecutive years, with the fulness of a farmer, whose life had been spent in attending to little else. The "Thoughts," just mentioned, he had determined to enlarge by the introduction of new facts, intending to re-model and publish them under the title of "Letters on Rural Œconomics, addressed to Mr. Arthur Young;" the work was even advertised; from the more urgent claims of politics, however, the design dropped, though he could have brought to the subject considerable practical knowledge, having actually predicted early in the season the bad harvest of 1795, and finding little credence to his prognostics in the country, brought his carriage nearly full of young wheat ears to town to convince his friends there of the fact, but with little more success. Several plans for improving the condition of the poor in his neighbourhood originated with him. He particularly recommended, as promoting a spirit of honest independence, institutions for mutual support in cases of age and infirmity; and visited, superintended, and subscribed to them, inculcating also sentiments among the members of piety, order, and industry. Harvest-Home was always celebrated at Butler's Court (changed from its former appellation of Gregories) with abundant hospitality, the family mingling in the gaiety of the scene without reserve. The forlorn condition of the unhappy exiles from France particularly excited his commiseration, and his house became a refuge for some of the most distinguished till more certain means of support could be provided, incurring many pecuniary difficulties from this unbounded humanity; others he recommended to his friends; and for the general body he was a constant intercessor with government. The well-known school at Penn, in his vicinity, for their destitute offspring, was established under his immediate care and patronage, and in his will he commends it strenuously to the continued favour of government.

In October, 1795, a grant, though a tardy one, was awarded to his eminent public services in a pension of 1200*l.* per annum on the civil list, and afterwards another of 2500*l.* on the four and a half per cent. fund; neither of them solicited directly or indirectly, but said to have originated from the express wish of the King. The manner in which it came, however, formed no object of consideration with the political party to whom he was opposed, the simple fact of receiving it being deemed sufficient to justify pretty strong censures in Parliament, and from the less respectable portion of it out of doors connected with the press, the most rancorous abuse, and the most unjust and ungenerous imputations, which among the same class of persons are occasionally continued to the present day. It was in vain to urge that it was deserved by lengthened and very remarkable public services—by his personal disinterestedness on many occasions—by his Reform Bill, which for twelve years past had saved the country nearly 80,000*l.* annually in hard money, as well as the extinction of a source of what might have been converted to undue influence in Parliament—by the reformation of the pay-office in guarding against the serious deficits so frequently experienced there, and rendering available to the public service about 1,000,000*l.* the usual balance in hand—and if for nothing else, by his exertions against the revolutionary opinions of the day; which in the general belief warded off the most imminent peril with which the constitution of the country had been threatened since the time of James II. These latter labours, however, constituted his sole offence in the eyes of his former coadjutors and admirers; they had nothing else to allege against him, and the acceptance of the pension was considered as the consummation of the crime. The heat of the moment caused them to forget that a pension is the usual and most open and honourable mode of rewarding great abilities devoted to the advancement of the public good; that if receiving it were a proof of corruption, few of their own friends at that moment but were equally corrupt; and that in fact, tried by this standard of purity, there was scarcely a single honest public name, not excepting Lord Chatham himself, to be found in our annals. Against those effusions of irritation rather than of good sense or argument, Mr. Burke had to place a public life of thirty years of unsullied purity, which, in the language of an eminent Whig, when alluding to the fact, " was proof against his own embarrassed circumstances."

The effects of clamour and abuse, whether right or wrong, when perseveringly continued, are rarely inconsiderable. Some even of his admirers began to doubt the propriety of his accepting the boon, among whom was the anonymous author of the " Pursuits of Literature," who, though convinced, as he said, that no man ever better, or possibly so well, deserved it, seems inclined to think he ought not to have received it, in order to avoid the possibility of imputation upon his motives. This is a refinement of fastidiousness not to be looked for in the affairs of the world, and if attended to, would preclude most public servants from experiencing public gratitude. If a statesman has honourably earned reward, if it be honourably offered to his acceptance, and if he be, from the nature of his private circumstances, really in want of it, why, it may be asked, should it not be received? Would it not indicate weakness rather than strength of mind to be frighted from it by vulgar abuse, or by waiting to obtain that which never was, and never can be, received—universal assent to his merits? Or, are the insignificant in talents, the worthless and inefficient, or those who are already rich, and do not want it, alone to profit by the public bounty? " The word pension," said Lord Macartney, a statesman of experience and unspotted integrity even in India, then the hot-bed of temptation, " gives great offence to some gentlemen, but for my part I have lived too much in the world to suffer myself to be imposed upon by a word or a name. In every other country of Europe, a pension is considered the most honourable recompense which a subject can enjoy —I speak of free countries, such for instance as Sweden. * * * A pension is infinitely more honourable than a sinecure office; the one loudly speaks its meaning, but the other hypocritically lurks under a supposition of duty where there is nothing to do." His Lordship might have added that though many agree to abuse pensions, most men, when they have the opportunity, find it convenient to accept them.

The hostility to Mr. Burke on this occasion was carried into the House of Lords by the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, though answered by an animated defence from Lord Grenville there, and from Mr. Windham in the House of Commons. Some surprise was expressed that men of such consideration in the country, making every allowance for party feelings, should display so much illiberality toward the defender, perhaps the saviour of that very rank and property which served to elevate them above the mass of mankind, and from an atom of which, notwithstanding the countenance given to the new opinions, they would have been extremely loth to part. It seemed ungenerous that this should be done by former associates, by men who had acquiesced in grants to other, though less distinguished, public men for public services, and who from their position in the state might be supposed to rate at its proper value a long and laborious career, and to estimate those still more intense, though unseen and unrewarded labours, which form the toilsome preparatory to public eminence.

The attack, however, had the effect of drawing forth the celebrated " Letter to a Noble Lord," the most brilliant exhibition of powers perhaps in the whole range of English prose, which on first meeting with I read over twice (many parts half a dozen times) without intermission, and with no ordinary wonder at the powers of sarcasm, of irony, of indignant remonstrance, of pointed rebuke, and of imagery, in those few but bold and extraordinary figures which not merely impress the mind of the reader at the moment but are seldom forgotten. The striking passages are nearly as numerous as the sentences—a collection of flashes of indignant genius, roused by a sense of injury and aggression to throw out its consuming fires with no common force on the heads of the aggressors;—"I perceive in it," says the author of 'The Pursuits of Literature,' "genius, ability, dignity, imagination, and sights more than youthful poets when they dreamed, and sometimes the philosophy of Plato and the wit of Lucian." The pathetic lamentation for the loss of his son; the glowing tribute to the memory of his old friend in whose heart he had a place till the last beat, Lord Keppel uncle to the Duke of Bedford, show a different though not less striking style of powers. The notice of his own services to the country is less a formal recapitulation which the occasion in some degree called for, than a manly and modest allusion,—it is forcible and comprehensive, and what perhaps (the assertion is not made without deliberation) no other English statesman of the period can say. "My merits were, *in having had an active though not always an ostentatious share, in every one act, without exception, of undisputed constitutional utility in my time.*" The jealousies already noticed, which he had to surmount in his career, are strongly hinted at in the following passage: "I possessed not one of the qualities, nor cultivated one of the arts that recommend men to the favour and protection of the great. I was not made for a minion or a tool. As little did I follow the trade of winning the hearts by imposing on the understandings of the people. At every step in my progress in life (for in every step was I traversed and opposed,) and at every turnpike I met I was obliged to show my passport, and again and again to prove my sole title to the honour of being useful to my country by a proof that I was not wholly unacquainted with its laws and the whole system of its interests both abroad and at home. Otherwise no rank, no toleration even for me. I had no arts but manly arts. On them I have stood, and, please God, in spite of the Duke of Bedford, and the Earl of Lauderdale, to the last gasp will I stand."

To the Duke, who has long passed to the common receptacle of Whig and Tory, of Commoner and Peer, he particularly points his reprehension. His Grace's little experience in public business, his partiality to the party whose tenets were supposed to sap or threaten the foundations of all rank and property, the enormous grants of the crown to *his* family in former days, and his youth, were openings to an effective assault from any writer, but to an intellectual gladiator like Mr. Burke offered overpowering advantages. With such an opponent it was dangerous to have any thing to do; the ablest men, even in his unguarded moments, never came off without some grievous inflictions; like the electrical fish, if you touched him in anger he shook you to your centre. "I decline," said the indignant veteran, "his Grace's jurisdiction as a judge. I challenge the Duke of Bedford as a juror to pass upon the value of my services. I cannot recognise in his few and idle years, the competence to judge of my long and laborious life." Not content with overthrowing the politician, he aims a more deadly blow at his possessions, in alluding to the mode by which they were said to be acquired: one of the figures used is equally singular and powerful, rising to a high strain of eloquence, and furnishing one of the most forcible examples in rhetoric of the *argumentum ad hominem.*—"The grants to the house of Russel (by Henry VIII.) were so enormous as not only to outrage economy, but even to stagger credibility. The Duke of Bedford is the leviathan among all the creatures of the crown. He tumbles about his unwieldy bulk; he plays and frolics in the ocean of the royal bounty. Huge as he is, and whilst 'he lies floating many a rood' he is still a creature. His ribs, his fins, his whalebone, his blubber, the very spiracles through which he spouts a torrent of brine against his origin, and covers me all over with the spray—every thing of him, and about him, is from the crown. Is it for him to question the dispensation of the royal favour?"

Report says that the account given in this work of the origin of the Russel possessions is erroneous; it has never, however, been disproved, and Mr. Burke is not likely to have risked mere conjecture where confutation was so easy. It was on his part a serious, but not an unfair retaliation; for against an invading and wanton enemy all arms may be used, and he must be a poor soldier who chooses the weaker in preference to the stronger weapon. The regret perhaps is, that he wielded his advantage rather imprudently than unjustly, by furnishing hints to the Agrarians or Jacobins of a future day, who may be inclined to make experiments on what he calls the "low, fat, Bedford level."

His other assailant on this occasion, the Earl of Lauderdale, still to the delight of his friends, adorns that house of which he has long been so distinguished a member. Doubtless he has regretted the momentary injustice done to an old acquaintance and political leader;* as he is also said to have read his recantation from the then prevailing delusions of favour toward the French system of freedom of 1793, and to parliamentary reform. While so many able men however were thus misled, it must impress us still more with a conviction of the sagacity of their great opponent, who distinguished at a glance what it cost others so much teaching and lecturing and mental hammering to learn, in the school of political mistake and failure.

---

* From many complimentary effusions of his Lordship to Mr. Burke, the following handsome one, applied to his Reform Bill in 1781, is selected.—" He (Mr. Burke) was the only man in the country whose powers were equal to the forming and accomplishing so systematic and able a plan of reform; not a mean, narrow, wretched scheme of retrenchment, breaking in upon the

The misfortunes of the war, and the triumphant career of the Republican arms on the Continent, producing a feeling of despondency among some of the warmest friends of government, and a clamour for peace, Ministry gave way to it by opening negociations through two or three channels with the agents of the Republic, who received our advances with no small degree of insolence. Mr. Burke feeling for the national dignity, and convinced also that no useful results would ensue, saw with regret the timid and alarmed feelings that produced them. "To a people who have been once proud and great, and great because they were proud," said he, "a change in the national spirit is the most terrible of all revolutions."

To re-animate the drooping courage of the country, he again had recourse to his pen in 1796, bequeathing it the product in a dying legacy, "Thoughts on a Regicide Peace," in two letters addressed to a Member of the House of Commons. It is one of his best pieces, written in a wholly different style from the last; for as the letter to a noble Lord may be considered a kind of field-day to the light troops of his genius and imagination, this may be taken as the breaching battery of the heavy artil-

dignity of the crown, and the honour of the nation, but a great and beautiful arrangement of office, calculated not to degrade a government, but to exalt and to adorn it."

lery of his judgment and powers of reasoning. Many persons, and those no mean judges, look to it as his greatest effort of mind, in the strong, full, yet clear train of argument, precision of view and unity of purpose, submitted to the serious reflexion of the nation, without any appeal to the passions, or allowing himself scarcely the use of a figure. The outset offers a profound remark which in great degree demolishes a favourite popular notion. "I am not quite of the mind of those speculators who seem assured that necessarily, and by the constitution of things, all states have the same periods of infancy, manhood, and decrepitude, that are found in the individuals who compose them. Parallels of this sort rather furnish similitudes to illustrate or to adorn, than supply analogies from whence to reason. The objects which are attempted to be forced into an analogy are not found in the same classes of existence. Individuals are physical beings subject to laws universal and invariable. The immediate cause acting in these laws may be obscure; the general results are subjects of certain calculation. But commonwealths are not physical but moral essences. They are artificial combinations, and in their proximate efficient cause, the arbitrary productions of the human mind. We are not yet acquainted with the laws which necessarily influence the stability of that kind of work made by that kind of agent."

Two other letters under the same title—one of which was in progress through the press when he died, the other arranged from his manuscripts by his executors, and not published for a considerable time afterwards—pursue the subject in its various relations with the same vigour. To those who have passed through that tempestuous and alarming period, or to those who wish thoroughly to know what it was, they will be always sources of interest; they furnish the best idea of the true origin, and deadly nature of the war, of the impossibility of concluding peace upon any terms consistent with national honour and security, and prove that peace, if procured, would in reality be more dangerous to our best interests than continued hostility. The character drawn of what he calls "the Cannibal Republic," in different parts of the letters, is indeed an extraordinary effort, for any thing equal to which in completeness and force the reader will in vain look in any historical detail, ancient or modern. The exposure is as complete as if every individual member of the fearful machine, however minute, was directly under his eye. It is the finished piece of dissection of a wonderful political anatomist, who not merely traces the broad outline, the external figure and features of his *subject*, but whose knife penetrates to the heart, and whose saw bares even the *sensorium* of this great moral monster, displaying the whole of its secret workings, motives, and principles, the causes of its inflammatory temperament and morbid vigour.

Nothing is more remarkable in these letters than the prophetic truths which they contain. He wrote under an impression that his death was not far distant: "Whatever I write," he observes, "is in its nature testamentary; whether for thought or for action I am at the end of my career;" he leaves them as a species of political will for the use of those whom he was so soon to quit for ever, and the literal fulfilment of his predictions ~~from~~ part of form their remarkable features. He declares positively, at a moment when a general belief prevailed to the contrary, that no peace could or would take place; that it would not happen during his life. "I shall not live to behold the unravelling of the intricate plot which saddens and perplexes the awful drama of Providence now acting on the moral theatre of the world;" that our trials were only commencing, "we are not at an end of our struggle, nor near it; let us not deceive ourselves; we are at the beginning of great troubles"—that it was not merely unavoidable to continue the war for the present, but it would be a *long war;* and alluding to former contests, even hints at its continuance for a period of twenty years—with what surprising prescience on all these points it is unnecessary to repeat. Of the partition of Poland, which he had never ceased to reprobate, he says, "*Hereafter the world will have cause to rue this iniquitous measure, and they most who were most concerned in it.*" Who on reading this, will not bring to remembrance the calamities and degradations so long sustained by Austria, Prussia, and Russia (particularly the former two,) the actors in that spoliation, under the iron gripe of Bonaparte? Is it quite clear, notwithstanding the present calm, that the measure of retribution is full? Dying words have often been remarked to be impressive things, and not unfrequently true; and indeed if men are ever for a moment permitted by the Almighty to have the slightest degree of foreknowledge, it is near the termination of life, when the mind, almost abstracted from its tottering tenement, and in some degree purified from temporal interests and passions, forms the most correct and unprejudiced estimate of surrounding circumstances, of what is, and perhaps of what is to come. The sentiments of ordinary men at such times are worth serious consideration. But those of a great man, such as in the instance before us, distinguished through life for the possession of much wisdom and knowledge, claim no inconsiderable portion of our reverence and regard.

It has been already observed, that though a firm advocate for war as the less evil to which the country was exposed, he condemned almost uniformly, after the first year, the manner in which it was conducted; that it was most unfortunate is true; but though this seems to corroborate Mr. Burke's judgment, it by no means decides the question against its conductors. There were other differences, however, in his and Mr. Pitt's views, which seem also to tell in favour of the superior sagacity of the former, and as they bore on what have since proved some of the leading points of the contest, may be worth enumerating. Mr. Burke, from a very early period in its progress, declared that it would be an arduous and a long war. Mr. Pitt, on the contrary, not only publicly in the House of Commons, but at his own fireside, at his own table, and in the most unreserved manner to his confidential friends, maintained that the war would be short, and the superiority on our part not doubtful. Mr. Burke, from the moment of the declaration of hostilities, wished to see the integrity of the French territory preserved sacred and inviolate, as necessary to the equilibrium of Europe. Mr. Pitt, from the circumstances attending the surrender of her first towns to the Allies, pretty plainly intimated some intention of permitting her to be dismembered, and this is said to have been the first thing that thoroughly roused her indignation. Mr. Burke wished to have it perfectly understood in France, that the war was levelled at the faction which governed her, not against the nation. Mr. Pitt thought it unnecessary or useless to be precise in the distinction. Mr. Burke urged that from the peculiar nature of the contest France should be attacked only in France, and that frittering away our force against her colonies, and even reducing them one after another, neither crippled her in the slightest degree, nor in point of fact advanced a step nearer to subduing her.* Mr. Pitt evidently attributed an importance to these conquests which events by no means authorised.

At the conclusion of the struggle we have seen all Mr. Burke's opinions verified or followed to the letter. The war proved trying and long beyond precedent. France to be overpowered was obliged to be attacked in France. The allied Sovereigns had to come forward and declare that they made war not upon her, but upon her ruler, (the old root of jacobin aggression which had sprouted afresh in the form of an Emperor.) And with some hundred thousands of men at their backs, they found it necessary explicitly to come forward, and to guarantee the strict integrity of her territory before they could hope to succeed.

"Nothing is more notorious," said Mr. Burke in his last political paper,† dictated about two months before his death, "than that I have the misfortune of thinking that no one capital measure relative to political arrangements, and still less that a new military plan for the defence of either kingdom (alluding to Ireland) in this arduous war, has been taken upon any other principle than such as must conduct us to inevitable ruin." Mr. Windham constantly supported his views, but is understood to have been outvoted by the other Members of Ministry.

---

* He disliked more particularly the expensive and destructive West India expeditions, and with some reason.—"A remote, an expensive, a murderous, and in the end an unproductive adventure, carried on upon ideas of mercantile knight-errantry, without any of the generous wildness of Quixotism, is considered as sound, solid sense; and a war in a wholesome climate, a war at our door, a war directly on the enemy, a war in the heart of his country, a war in concert with an internal ally, and in combination with the external, is regarded as folly and romance."—Letter II. on Regicide Peace, vol. viii. p. 232, 8vo. ed.

† Burke's Works, vol. ix. p. 455.

CHAPTER XIV.

Report concerning Mr. Burke.—Decline of his Health.—Letter to Mrs. Leadbeater.—His death and disposal of his Residence and Estate.—His person.—Conversation.—Wit.—Piety.—Moral Character.—Zeal in Public Measures.

THE sagacity which enabled Mr. Burke to penetrate the unhappy results in the train of the French Revolution, and the consequent energy and pertinacity with which he opposed it both in speaking and in writing, excited among many persons who had not the same length of view as himself, and indeed no conception whatever of the evils impending, a variety of conjectures as to the cause. At first they were merely surprised at the boldness of his predictions; but when the breach took place with his party for what they thought merely speculative differences of opinion, they put him down as in some degree insane, an idea which was afterwards industriously circulated, and to which he partly alluded, after a vehement sally in the House of Commons, by a deliberate address to the chair in the words of St. Paul, "I am not mad, most noble Festus, but speak the words of truth and soberness." With those who found an interest in decrying his public exertions the rumour was frequently renewed, particularly after the death of his son, when his grief was known to be extreme; and it sometimes had the effect even of imposing upon his friends, an instance of which occurred soon after the publication of the *Letter to a Noble Lord.*

A report, under the guise of seeming precaution and secrecy, reached them in town that he was afflicted with such total alienation of mind as to wander about his park during the day, kissing his cows and horses, a circumstance which, if true, would be no more than is daily done by many honest farmers and stable boys, without any imputation of a wandering of the wits, and which with Mr. Burke's warm affection toward the dumb as well as the speaking members of his establishment would have been no great matter for wonder, he having in fact some favourite cows* who chiefly grazed near the house. A man of rank, however, left London instantly to learn the particulars, and was received in the usual manner of an old friend without observing any perceptible change; not quite satisfied with this, yet deeming it indecorous to ask questions on the subject, he adverted in conversation to public circumstances, and to the probable train of any new studies by his host, when the latter, unsuspicious of the drift of the visitor, produced some of the most eloquent and ably argued passages which he was then writing from the Letters on Regicide Peace. Convinced now of his information being erroneous, if not malicious, he hinted to Mrs. Burke the main purport of his journey, when he received the detail of the following singular and affecting incident, which probably formed the foundation for the story, though it had thriven marvellously in the journey from Beaconsfield to London.

A feeble old horse, which had been a great favourite with the junior Mr. Burke, and his constant companion in all rural journeyings and sports, when both were alike healthful and vigorous, was now, in his age and on the death of his master, turned out to take the run of the park for the remainder of his life at ease, with strict injunctions to the servants that he should neither be ridden nor molested by any one. While walking one day in solitary musing, Mr. Burke perceived this worn out old servant come close up to him, and at length after some moments spent in viewing him, followed by seeming recollection and confidence, deliberately rested its head upon his bosom. The singularity of the action itself, the remembrance of his dead son, its late master, who occupied much of his thoughts at all times, and the apparent attachment and almost intelligence of the poor brute, as if it could sympathise with his inward sorrows, rushing at once into his mind, totally overpowered his firmness, and throwing his arms over its neck he wept long and loudly.

---

* A pretty piece, by Reinagle, delineating the house and grounds, represents Mr. Burke in front of the mansion patting a favourite cow, and his lady and a female friend walking at a little distance.

His health, however, though not his intellectual powers, had been for some time in a very declining state, until it terminated in a degree of general debility and loss of muscular power which rendered exertion and his usual degree of exercise impracticable. To this state of unexpected at least, if not premature, decay, his habits of application, literary pursuits, and former laborious Parliamentary exertions, tended, when his frame, shaken by the loss of his son, and his mind losing that buoyancy which his fond paternal hopes had inspired, left no active power or principle to counteract the inroads of infirmity; that blow he found it impossible to forget or to recover, and from that moment he complained of being "a dejected old man, buried in the anticipated grave of a feeble old age." Those who did not know his disposition, fancied he sustained much annoyance from the numerous attacks of the partizans of the French opinions, who indeed possessed many of the strong holds of the press, and to which the letters on Regicide Peace proved a new stimulus for renewed hostility. This however was not the case; the writings of the lower class of opponents he rarely saw and never heeded; the attacks of the higher, in the way of argument, he answered and refuted; the mere abuse of either he despised. Of the latter, an instance occurred about this time which furnishes a pretty good sample of the *justice* with which he was commonly assailed; for a freebooting bookseller finding himself prevented from appropriating to his own use the literary property of this eminent man, contrived to give vent to vulgar insolence by an abusive advertisement against "Edmund Burke the Pensioner." The same person used to say, that Mr. Burke had fairly frighted his printers from going near him, on account of being rated for their mistakes with vehemence and variety of invective; not one at length would venture to approach his house, and therefore he was obliged to carry the proofs for revision himself.

Finding medical aid of little avail, Mr. Burke proceeded to Bath early in February, 1797, for the benefit of the waters, which in early life had proved so beneficial. Here he continued for about four months confined to his bed or to his couch the greater part of the time; "My health," said he, in a letter dictated at the time, "has gone down very rapidly; and I have been brought hither with very faint hopes of life, and enfeebled to such a degree, as those who had known me some time ago could scarcely think credible." This letter, which was on the affairs of Ireland, in reply to one addressed to him from that country, though dictated by snatches amidst pain and suffering, enforces with little diminution of force the same wise policy toward healing her internal divisions, which he had always advised, but which still remains to be completed; he hints at something like the Union, by urging that the seat of her superior or *imperial* politics should be in England; Ireland is hurt, he says, not by too much

English, but by too much Irish influence.—This was his last effort on a political subject.

The day before he quitted Bath, the following letter was dictated to Mrs. Leadbeater, and signed by his tremulous hand; it was among the last dispatched of his private letters:

"My dear Mrs. Leadbeater,

"I feel as I ought to do your constant hereditary kindness to me and mine. What you have heard of my illness is far from exaggerated. I am, thank God, alive, and that is all. Hastening to my dissolution, I have to bless Providence that I do not suffer a great deal of pain. * * * * *

"Mrs. Burke has a tolerable share of health in every respect, except much use of her limbs. She remembers your mother's most good-natured attentions, as I am sure I do, with much gratitude. I have ever been an admirer of your talents and virtues, and shall ever wish most cordially for every thing which can tend to your credit and satisfaction. I therefore congratulate you very heartily on the birth of your son; and pray remember me to the representative of your family, who I hope still keeps up the school of which I have so tender a remembrance; though after so long an absence, and so many unpleasant events of every kind that have distracted my thoughts, I hardly dare to ask for any one, not knowing whether they are living or dead, lest I should be the means of awakening unpleasant recollections. Believe me to be, with the most respectful and affectionate regards, my dear Mrs. Leadbeater,

"Your faithful friend,
"And very humble servant,
"Edmund Burke."

"Bath, 23d May, 1797.

"P. S. Pray remember me to Mr. Leadbeater. I have been at Bath these four months to no purpose, and am therefore to be removed to my own house at Beaconsfield to-morrow, to be nearer to a habitation more permanent, humbly and fearfully hoping that my better part may find a better mansion."

There is something very touching in the mild and cheerful tone of this resignation to the divine will, in the allusions to his residence being so near to his final resting-place (Beaconsfield Church), and the release of his spirit from its infirm and fragile earthly inclosure to a state of more perfect freedom. Of this letter the late Bishop of Meath justly observed in a communication to the lady to whom it is addressed; "The great scene on which Providence gifted and allotted him to move was now closing; and no record can ever be produced to mark the leading features of his character so strongly as that you possess in this letter. It shows him still cherishing the early affections of his heart, among the higher cares which the station he had attained imposed upon him; and after having controlled the destinies of the world, as *all now* agree he did, by his later writings, turning his last thoughts to the retired, unassuming daughter of the friend of his youth."* To Beaconsfield, therefore, where he had enjoyed so many of the honours and comforts of life, he returned to die; for there is something of satisfaction to the human heart in breathing our last and in depositing our bones in the spot where we have spent the most honourable and useful part of our being; "It is so far at least," said he to some one just before quitting Bath,

---

* Poems by Mary Leadbeater, p. 323.

"on my way to the tomb, and I may as well travel it alive as dead."

While waiting the event which was delayed for a month longer, he gave directions about the disposal of some of his papers, particularly desiring that the chief of those relating to the impeachment should be published, repeating the same opinion of the whole proceeding which he had always expressed. Public affairs occupied much of his thoughts to the last moment; "Never," said he, "succumb to the enemy; it is a struggle for your existence as a nation; and if you must die, die with the sword in your hand; but I have no fears whatever for the result; there is a salient, living principle of energy in the public mind of England which only requires proper direction to enable her to withstand this or any other ferocious foe; persevere till this tyranny be overpast." To his own increasing weakness he submitted with the same placid and christian-like resignation undisturbed by a murmur; hoping, as he said, to obtain the divine mercy through the intercession of a blessed Redeemer, which, in his own words, "he had long sought with unfeigned humiliation, and to which he looked with a trembling hope."

A presentiment almost of the moment of the final summons from the world seemed to have prevailed with him; for several of the previous hours were employed in sending messages of affectionate remembrance to absent friends, in expressing his forgiveness of all who had in any manner injured or offended him, and in requesting the same from all whom his general or particular infirmities had offended. He recapitulated his motives of action in great public emergencies, his then thoughts on the alarming state of the country, "the ruling passion even in death," gave some private directions connected with his approaching decease, and afterwards listened attentively to the perusal, by his own desire, of some serious papers of Addison on religious subjects and on the immortality of the soul. These duties finished, his attendants, with Mr. Nagle of the war-office, a relation, were conveying him to his bed, when, indistinctly articulating a blessing on those around him, he sunk down and after a momentary struggle expired, July 8th, 1797, in the sixty eighth year of his age. "His end," said Dr. Lawrence with great truth, "was suited to the simple greatness of mind which he displayed through life, every way unaffected, without levity, without ostentation, full of natural grace and dignity. He appeared neither to wish nor to dread, but patiently and placidly to await the appointed hour of his dissolution." "When I have revolved his various labours," writes the author of the Pursuits of Literature after an animated apostrophe to his memory, "I would record in lasting characters and in our holiest and most honourable temple, the departed orator of England, the statesman, and the christian, Edmund Burke!" "*Remuneratio ejus Cum Altissimo!*"*

When examined after death, his heart was found to be preternaturally enlarged, affording some confirmation to the belief, if the common idea of the sympathy between the heart and the affections of the mind have any foundation in fact, that grief for the loss of his son killed him. On the 15th he was buried according to his direction in Beaconsfield Church, near to his brother and son, and where also his wife has been subsequently laid; the pall-bearers being the Duke of Portland, Duke of Devonshire, the Lord Chancellor, the Speaker of the House of Commons, Earl Fitzwilliam, Earl of Inchiquin, Sir Gilbert Elliott, and Mr. Windham. All the gentry of the surrounding country, and many of rank, consideration, and talents, from town, attended to pay the last mark of respect to his remains; and not the least sincere mourners on the occasion were many of the poorer classes in the neighbourhood, whose expressions of grief and regret paid that tribute to the virtues of the philanthropist which their superiors chiefly awarded to the statesman. All the neighbouring pulpits also offered their tribute of praise to his memory; the periodical publications also furnished several well-written testimonies of the same sort; while Mr. Fox proposed in the House of Commons that he should be interred in the national receptacle for illustrious talents, Westminster Abbey—an honour, however, which he was informed the terms of the will of the deceased precluded. The writer has been informed from authority he cannot question, that this fact was communicated to Mr. Fox previous to his proposition being made in the House, and the inference drawn by some of Mr. Burke's friends was, that as he knew the proposal could not be complied with, he introduced it to preserve a seeming show of liberality towards his memory which he did not in reality feel. This it is to be hoped is a mistake, or at least an erroneous conclusion. But it is true that the reply of Mr. Fox to a letter of Mr. Nagle, who wrote off to him an account of the decease of Mr. Burke soon after it took place, and detailing some particulars of the conversation which preceded it, was a cold commonplace.

---

* "Of Burke it may be truly said, that if any man were calculated to claim universal attention, it was he. His stupendous variety of knowledge, his command of language, his taste, his power of expressing the finest ideas that could enter the mind of any human being, rendered him, in the opinion of all who could appreciate his excellence, and, among the rest, of Johnson himself, the first man of the time in which he lived: and as long as eloquence will charm, his works will hold a place among the most valuable productions of human genius."

Miss Hawkins's Memoirs.

The disinclination to posthumous honours expressed in the will, though characteristic of his unpretending character, is an instance of self-denial which is rarely exhibited by men the most unassuming in public life; rank and money may be refused, but honorary offerings to our fame, the speaking brass and marble and inscription, form another and more highly-prized species of public reward. His reason for adverting to the subject he expresses to be "because I know the partial kindness to me of some of my friends; but I have had in my life but too much of noise and compliment." The first clause in this testamentary document marks in a manner equally striking, his piety, and his attachment to his departed kindred: "According to the ancient, good, and laudable custom of which my heart and understanding recognise the propriety, I bequeath my soul to God, hoping for his mercy only through the merits of our Lord and Saviour Jesus Christ. My body I desire to be buried in the Church at Beaconsfield, near to the bodies of my dearest brother and my dearest son, in all humility praying that as we have lived in perfect unity together, we may together have a part in the resurrection of the just." His brother in-law, John Nugent, he bequeaths to the protection of his political friends; and to his "entirely beloved and incomparable wife, Jane Mary Burke," the whole of his property in fee-simple. A plain tablet in the church, in accordance with his direction, simply expresses that his mortal remains lie there.

Mrs. Burke continued to reside at Butler's Court, visited and esteemed by all her husband's friends, among whom Mr. and Mrs. Windham were particulerly attentive, till her death, in the spring of 1812, having previously, in a great degree, lost the use of her limbs through rheumatism. In 1800 she is said to have published a novel, in two volumes; "Elliott, or Vicissitudes of Early Life;" to which her name is now put, though her friends believe it to be not her own, but the production of a female acquaintance for whom, from a benevolent motive, she corresponded with the publisher (Cawthorn) on the subject of bringing it out. Some time previous to her death she sold the mansion and estate near Beaconsfield to Mr. Dupré of Wilton Park, reserving, however, a life interest and for one year after her death in the house and grounds, for 38,500*l*., which, after clearing off incumbrances, fell to her own relations—the Nugent family. Mr. Burke's brothers, it has been remarked, died without issue. But a daughter and the only child of his sister Julia (who as already stated had married Patrick French, Esq. of the county of Galway, in Ireland) lived with her uncle at Beaconsfield, after the death of her parents, till united in marriage with Major Haviland, son of General Haviland, one of the companions of General Wolfe in America—a most honourable and high spirited old soldier, who became known and highly esteemed by his late Majesty through some anecdotes told of his romantic generosity, and of whom Mr. Burke used to say he knew few men, who had not been professedly devoted to study, possess more ingenuity and information.*

---

* The following notice of this veteran appeared in the newspapers at the period of his death, September, 1784:

"Died at Penn, in Buckinghamshire, in the 67th year of his age, General William Haviland, Colonel of the 45th regiment. He was an officer distinguished for his long and able services, having spent his whole life in the army; for, his father being an officer, he was born while the regiment was on duty in Ireland.

Thomas Haviland Burke, Esq. of Lincoln's Inn, who is highly spoken of by his friends, is the only offspring of this marriage; he is consequently the grand-nephew of

---

He himself acted as Lieutenant, under Lord Cathcart, at the memorable siege of Carthagena; and afterwards with Vernon at the conquest of Porto Bello. He then served as Aid-du-camp, under General Blakeney, during the rebellion in Scotland. In the subsequent war, from the beginning of hostilities, he served in America, where he had a separate command, and by his exertions and success received the particular acknowledgments of Lord Amherst, who has ever since honoured him with his friendship. A singular genius for mechanics enabled him to concert measures for passing the Rapids; and the fertility of his resources, in other unusual circumstances, made him very efficient (under his distinguished commander) in contributing to the success of the English arms in America. In the same war he acted as second in command at the conquest of Martinique, and in a very high one at the Havannah; so that having had the good fortune through life to be placed in the most conspicuous scenes of action on chosen services and with the most eminent men, he acted in such a manner as even among them to attain a high reputation for courage and ability. When the last war broke out he was put on the staff, and after being a very short time at Whitehaven he was entrusted with the command of the western division of the island during the whole time the French invasion was expected, and there continued till the end of the war. The station was important, and the service delicate; there he had the happiness to preserve perfect harmony between the regular forces and militia; while, by the prudent disposition of his troops and an exact discipline, he performed the more substantial functions, he maintained the dignity of his situation by a style of life which became the service of his sovereign. His house was open to the navy as well as to the army; and the force of personal character, which was cordial, plain, informed, and unaffected, did much to facilitate the national service in a country little inured to the burthen of arms, and when so many principal gentlemen were drawn away from their occupations and amusements. The same disposition followed him through life. To

Mr. Burke, and the only one who stands in that relation to him, and whose name and arms, as his nearest relation and the representative of the family, he has assumed. His father, from a sense of duty, accompanied his regiment, the 45th, to the West Indies, shortly after his marriage, and died at Martinique about the time he was gazetted Colonel. Mrs. Haviland remaining at home, received the afflicting intelligence of being a widow shortly before she became a mother; and feeling hurt, it is said, by the neglect of Mrs. Burke, with whom she had lived as a daughter, and who had promised to attend to her pecuniary interests in her will but forgot her promise, died at Brompton where she resided for the benefit of her health, in March, 1816, at the age of 46, said to be an admirable woman, not unworthy of being the niece of so distinguished a man. The library, and all the tokens of regard and admiration he had received from the good and great of the world, were left by Mrs. Burke, with the bulk of her property, to her nephew Mr. Nugent; the pieces of sculpture which ornamented the house were sold by auction by Christie, and some of them now grace the British Museum.

In adverting to some of the public and private characteristics of this remarkable man there will be found so

---

his own regiment he was a kind father, and to the younger officers of it his house was literally a home. The consequence however is, that, in a long course of service, overlooking many opportunities of emolument, but none of benevolence, though he always maintained a just economy, he has left his family in very narrow circumstances; for the sole reward of his services was a marching regiment on the Irish establishment, which was bestowed upon him very late in life, and with a constitution harassed and broken, not less from the variety than from the length of his services."

much to commend, that simple justice may run the risk of being deemed indiscriminate panegyric. Against this the writer is solicitous to guard himself by giving, in addition to his own opinions, occasionally the opinions of others more competent to form a correct judgment, well acquainted with the original, and some of whom, being opposed to him on political topics, will not be suspected of bestowing undeserved praise. He was not merely a very great man, but an eminently good one, in whose character or conduct there will be found little which the most devoted admirer need be afraid to probe, little over which an enemy can triumph; for his errors, whatever they were, chiefly arose from occasionally pushing the passions of virtue to excess.

In person, he was five feet ten inches high, erect, well formed, never very robust; when young, expert in the sports of his country and time, until his last illness active in habits suited to his years, and always, it scarcely need be added, particularly active in mind, having nothing of what he called "that master vice sloth" in his composition. His countenance in early life possessed considerable sweetness, and by his female friends was esteemed handsome. At a later period, it did not appear to be marked, particularly when in a state of quiescence, by that striking expression which, from the well known qualities of his mind, many persons expected to see; but the lines of thought were evident, and when excited by discussion there was an occasional working of the brow, occasioned partly by being near sighted, which let the attentive observer into the secret of the powerful workings within. From this defective state of vision, he almost constantly from about the year 1780, wore spectacles. An Irish literary lady of talent—and ladies are possibly the best judges of these matters—who enjoyed the pleasure of his acquaintance, thus describes him at the age of fifty in a letter to the present writer:

"He was the handsomest man I recollect to have seen; his stature about six feet, well made, portly, but not corpulent. His countenance was such as a painter would find it difficult precisely to draw (and indeed I always understood they complained of the difficulty:) its expression frequently varying, but always full of benevolence, marked, in my opinion, by strong intellect and softened by sensibility. * * * A full length portrait of him hangs in the Examination Hall of Dublin University; the figure, features, and complexion are like his, but the countenance, as a whole, by no means does him justice. * * * He was a most delightful companion, and had the art of rendering the timid easy in his company. His conversation, which was often serious and instructive, abounded at other times with wit, pleasantry, and good humour; whatever subject he spoke upon, and he spoke upon all, he excelled in, as if it had formed a particular study; and his language, though sometimes considered ornamented on public occasions, was distinguished by a fascinating simplicity, yet powerful and appropriate beyond what I can tell."—Another lady, with whose husband, a relation, he occasionally spent a day in Lamb's Conduit-street, describes him nearly in the same terms—"His address frank, yet dignified; his conversation interesting and various; and particularly to female society, playful and amusing in a high degree."—The best picture of him is that painted by Reynolds in 1775, in the possession of Earl Fitzwilliam, being bequeathed to him by Mrs. Burke. That in the University of Dublin was taken at a much later period of life, the face shorter than in Sir Joshua's, with something of contemplative severity in the expression.

Like Mr. Fox, he was somewhat negligent in common dress, being latterly distinguished by a tight brown coat which seemed to impede freedom of motion, and a little bob wig with curls, which, in addition to his spectacles, made him be recognised by those who had never previously seen him, the moment he rose to speak in the House of Commons. Though an ardent lover of poetry, which he prized at every period of life, and latterly of that of Milton* in particular as furnishing the grandest imagery in the language; yet, contrary to the common idea that love for poetry and music go together, he had little ear for the latter; Mr. Fox, it is known, had none at all; and it has been remarked as a singular coincidence that the ears of Mr. Pitt and Dr. Johnson should have been equally tuneless. His address in private life possessed something of a chivalrous air—noble, yet unaffected and unreserved, impressing upon strangers of every rank, imperceptibly and without effort, the conviction of his being a remarkable man. "Sir," said Johnson, to exemplify this, "if Burke were to go into a stable to give directions about his horse, the ostler would say, 'We have had an extraordinary man here.'" His manner in mixed society was unobtrusive, surrendering at once his desire to talk to any one who had, or who thought he had, the least claim to be heard: "Where a loud tongued talker was in company," writes Cumberland, "Edmund Burke declined all claims upon attention." When Johnson one evening seized upon every topic of discourse that was started, and an auditor, after separating, remarked to Mr. Burke that he should have liked to hear more from another person, meaning him, "Oh no," replied the latter, "it is enough for me to have rung the bell to him." Of literary society he was extremely fond, preferring it, more perhaps than his own political interests demanded, to that which was merely distinguished by rank and fashion; but after the deaths of his older friends he did not cultivate it as before.

---

* Like Johnson, Goldsmith, and many others, he had a very poor opinion of Ossian; besides which, three-fourths at least, he said, of the productions ascribed to him he considered forgeries. "It was only a trick of cool Scotch effrontery," he once said, "to try the precise range of English gullibility; nothing but the blind nationality of Scotchmen themselves gave the least countenance to the imposture."

His conversational powers partook of the same fulness of mind which distinguished his eloquence; they never ran dry; the supply for the subject always exceeded the demand. "Burke," said Johnson, "is never what we call hum-drum; never in a hurry to begin conversation, at a loss to carry it on, or eager to leave off." On many other occasions also the moralist celebrated their easy excellence, and though in some degree of a different character from his own, they were not less instructive, and little less forcible. Among friends, his sallies of thought were frequently of a serious cast, sometimes philosophical, sometimes moral, the elevation of the sentiment commonly forming a contrast to the unaffected simplicity with which it was delivered. A profound reflection, or great moral truth, often slipped from him as if by accident, without seeming to have cost any trouble in the elaboration; while Johnson's throes in the delivery of bright thoughts were obvious, and he took care to *hammer* the offspring into his hearers. What we have of the sayings of Burke make us anxious for more; he has himself indeed drawn up the line of battle of his genius to the public gaze, but who does not regret that he had no Boswell in attendance, to note down the transient sallies of his social hours, to collect and arrange the flying squadron of his brain ?*

At table his habits were temperate, preferring the lighter to the stronger wines, in opposition to Johnson's gradation of liquors, "claret for boys, port for men, brandy for heroes ;" "then," said he, "give me claret, for I like to be a boy and partake of the honest hilarity of youth." At a later period of his life, when exhausted by mental exertion or attacks of indigestion, arising from close application, he was accustomed to take large quantities of water hot as it could be drunk ; "*warm* water," said he, "sickens, but *hot* water stimulates." In allusion partly to this habit, the writer of a piece in imitation of "Retaliation," who applies the different kinds of wine, as Goldsmith had done dishes, to his characters—as port to Johnson, champaign to Garrick, burgundy to Reynolds, thus says of the orator :

To Burke a pure libation bring,
Fresh drawn from pure *Castalian* spring ;
With civic oak the goblet bind,
Fit emblem of his patriot mind ;
Let *Clio* as his taster sip,
And Hermes hand it to his lip.

---

* When Croft's Life of Dr. Young was spoken of as a good imitation of Johnson's style, "No, no," said he, "it is not a good imitation of Johnson ; it has all his pomp without his force ; it has all the nodosities of the oak without its strength ; it has all the contortions of the Sybil without the inspiration."

Speaking of the new sect of philosophers of 1793, "These fellows," said he, "have a wrong twist in their heads, which ten to one gives them a wrong twist in their hearts also."

When told of Mr. Godwin's definition of gratitude in Political Justice, "I should take care to spare him the commission of that

An amiable feature in Mr. Burke's disposition was a dislike to any thing like detraction, or that insinuation against private character too often tolerated even in what is called good society, which, without amounting to slander, produces nearly the same effects. When this occurred in his own house by any one with whom he was familiar, he would directly check it, or drop a hint to that effect; "Now that you have begun with his defects, I presume you mean to finish with a catalogue of his virtues;" and sometimes said, though mildly, "censoriousness is allied to none of the virtues." When introduced by others whom it might have been rude to interrupt, he took the part of the accused by apologies, or by urging a different construction on their actions, and, as soon as he could, changed the subject.

Johnson, who denied him scarcely any other talent or merit, would not admit that he possessed wit; he always got into the mire, he said, by attempting it. Wilkes, however, who certainly was no mean judge, thought differently; so did Boswell; so did Mr. Windham; so did Mr. Courtenay, himself a wit, who thus commences an ode addressed to Mr. Malone, from Bath—

Whilst you illumine Shakspeare's page,
And dare the future critic's rage,
Or on the past refine;
Here many an eve I pensive sit,
No Burke pours out the stream of wit,
No Boswell joys o'er wine.

vice by never conferring upon him a favour."—"Swaggering paradoxes," he added, "when examined, often sneak into pitiful logomachies."

Of reasoning upon political theories, he observed, "The *majors* make a pompous figure in the battle, but the victory of truth depends upon the little *minor* of circumstances."

The same opinion was entertained by successive Houses of Commons for many years, and from those Members—and they were no small number who smarted under its lash—there were frequent exclamations against what they termed "the wantonness of his wit and the licentiousness of his eloquence,"—a quality which, as an auxiliary in debate, when under prudent management, and subservient to something more solid, he found very effective; Lord North was in this respect his only competitor, and Mr. Sheridan afterwards his only superior. Mr. Pitt, when he had no more effectual answer to give to his keener sallies, which was not unfrequently the case, used to term them "the overflowings of a mind, the richness of whose wit was unchecked for the time by its wisdom;" and an able anonymous writer, during the American war, among other distinguishing characteristics of his mind, particularly points to his "sarcastic wit." For Johnson's remark, however, there was some foundation in occasional fits of punning, to which he gave way round the social table among intimate friends, in order, as he said, to amuse the ladies; and these were sometimes so indifferent as to draw down smart rallies from his niece, Miss French, with "Really, uncle, that is very poor." "There now, you have quite spoiled it; we expected something better;" but there was some little malicious pleasure even in his failures; for the less credit he gained by his efforts, the more he was accustomed to smile at the disappointment of those who were in expectation of hearing something very fine. His main strength in conversation, however, did not lie, like Johnson's, so much in cutting repartee, as in a more playful cast of jocularity, though by no means destitute of pungency; sometimes quaint and humorous, sometimes coarse enough, frequently of classical origin or allusion, as several of the specimens preserved by Boswell evince, but without the biting severity of the lexicographer which he characterised on one occasion very promptly and happily in reply to Dr. Robertson the historian, who observing that Johnson's rebukes were but righteous oil which did not break the head; "Oil!" replied Mr. Burke, "oil of vitriol!"*

A much higher feature of his character was a fervent and unfeigned spirit of piety, cheerful but humble, unallied to any thing like fanaticism, expressive of a deep dependence on the dispensations of Providence, traces of which are to be found in the letters of his boyhood; for having been early taught to study the sacred volume with reverence, an intimate acquaintance with its lessons and phraseology rested on his mind, and may be seen in his subsequent writings and speeches sometimes to a fault. In the great trial of his fortitude, the loss of his son, the most affecting lamentations are accompanied by confessions of his weakness, the vanity of his desires, and whatever he might wish or think to the contrary, the superior wisdom of the Divine decree. He preferred the Church of England to all others, as on the whole the most pure and estimable; like Johnson, he viewed the Roman Catholics with more favour than many others were inclined to show them; and going still farther than him, professed strong regard for the dissenters, from which, if he ever swerved for a moment, it was in 1790—1792, when the leaders of that body sunk the character of ministers of religion in that of violent and very questionable politicians.

---

* When his friend the Rev. Mr. Marlay was appointed to the Deanery of Ferns, "I do not like the name," said he, "it sounds so like a *barren* title; it might be a subject for contest between Dr. *Heath* and Dr. *Moss*."

Alluding to livings, he observed that Horace had a good one in view, in speaking of—*Est modus in rebus sunt certi denique fines;* which he translated "a modus in the tythes and fines certain."

When some one inquired whether the Isle of Man was worth a journey thither to see, "By all means," said Mr. Burke, "the proper study of *mankind* is *man*."

Boswell, when trying to give a definition of man, called him a *cooking* animal; "Your definition is good," replied Mr. Burke, "I now see the full force of the common proverb, 'there is reason in the roasting of eggs.'"

When the same industrious chronicler was describing some learned ladies assembled around, and vying in attention to, a worthy and tall friend of theirs (Johnson,) "Ay," said Mr. Burke, "like maids round a may-pole."

In allusion to the chairing of Mr. Wilkes, he applied to it Horace's description of Pindar's numbers, '*Fertur numeris lege solutis*,' altering the second word to *humeris; he* (Wilkes) *is carried on shoulders uncontrolled by law.*

His moral character stood wholly unimpeached by any thing that approached to the name of vice. "The unspotted innocence, the firm integrity of Burke," said Dr. Parr, "want no emblazoning, and if he is accustomed to exact a rigorous account of the moral conduct of others (*in public matters*,) it is justified in one who shuns not the most inquisitorial scrutiny into his own." Unlike some of his greatest contemporaries, he made neither the bottle nor the dice his household deities; he had no taste for pursuits that kill time rather than pass it; "I have no time," said he, "to be idle." In the country the mornings, often at an early hour, were devoted to agricultural pursuits; in town to study, literary composition, or political business, bending his way in the afternoon to the House of Commons, whence he returned on the termination of business, sometimes to literary society, more frequently fatigued and occasionally fretted, to the soothing comforts of his own fire-side. "No wonder," said he jocularly on some occasions, "that my friend Charles

(Fox) is so often more vigorous than I in the House, for when I call upon him in my way thither, jaded by the occupations of the day, there he is, just out of bed, breakfasting at three o'clock, fresh and unexhausted, for the contentions of the evening." The same affectionate disposition which Mr. Shackleton remarked in the boy, continued through life in the domestic relations of the man; his duties there might be said in a peculiar degree to be his pleasures; and one of the best proofs of it was the cordial attachment and unanimity prevailing in a large family connexion, of which he formed the centre. He never forgot an old friend or an obligation, often lamenting that his short tenure of power precluded the possibility of giving substantial proofs of his regard. His philanthropy, which frequently drew praises from his political antagonists, was often appealed to by numerous begging letters, sometimes requiring a large portion of the morning to peruse and answer; and his exertions for some of the superior class of applicants, such as literary men and others, were occasionally repaid with gross ingratitude. His hospitality was always greater than his means; at no time did he appear to more advantage than when doing the honours of his house and table.

The Rev. Mr. Crabbe, who was well acquainted with him, adds his testimony to that of many others—" Of his private worth, of his wishes to do good; of his affability and condescension; his readiness to lend assistance where he knew it was wanted; and his delight to give praise where he thought it was deserved." " All know," continues he, " that his powers were vast, his acquirements various, and I take leave to add, that he applied them with unremitted attention to those objects which he believed tended to the honour and welfare of his country; but it may not be so generally understood that he was very assiduous in the more private duties of a benevolent nature; that he delighted in giving encouragement to any promise of ability, and assistance to any appearance of desert. To what purposes he employed his pen, and with what eloquence he spake in the senate, will be told by many, who yet may be ignorant of the solid instruction as well as the fascinating pleasantry found in his common conversation among his friends; and his affectionate manners, amiable disposition, and zeal for their happiness, which he manifested in the hours of retirement with his family."

With something of the temperament of his country, his resentments were warm and open, though placable; the instances, however, were few in number, for during a long and most tempestuous public life, he conciliated the esteem of his chief opponents, nor is it remembered that he was engaged with any of them in one hostile personal squabble. It has been said, with gross perversion of the truth, that he bore ill-will toward Mr. Fox after their quarrel. So far is this from being the case, that though freely condemning his politics, he spoke of him otherwise among his private friends with affection, by saying, " he was a man made to be loved; there was not a particle of gall in his composition," and in one of his last publications, with an evident allusion to him, writes, " Some of my oldest friends (and I wish I could say it of more of them) make a part in that Ministry. There are some indeed, ' whom my dim eyes in vain explore.' In my mind a greater calamity could not have fallen on the public than *the exclusion of one of them.*" He valued himself, he said, for the regard that gentleman had once professed for him, and felt proportional regret on its cessation.

Not one of the least merits of Mr. Burke was in being so perfectly free from any thing like envy or jealousy of contemporary talent, as often to surrender to others during the first sixteen years of his Parliamentary life, the reputation of constitutional measures which he not only suggested but chiefly achieved. The Nullum Tempus act, the Jury bill, the first relief to the Roman Catholics, and many others, were of this class. It may appear strange, or a very unusual effort of generosity, that any one should do this to a certain degree in his own wrong, by withholding from himself to bestow on others that which was calculated to ensure honest and undisputed fame; but the fact was *he* always looked to the success of his party; *others* regarded that which was chiefly personal to themselves. He alludes with some satisfaction in the notice of his political career* to have "reserved nothing for himself," to have awarded to every one "a full and heaped measure of justice," "to have disciplined to the best of his power all the talents he met with for the advantage of the public service." To this discipline, this teaching, prompting, and example, Mr. Fox owed no small share of his fame, and on four different occasions in the House of Commons he himself had the candour to confess that to these he owed it *all*.

The greatest defect of Mr. Burke approached so near to what is often a virtue that it is sometimes difficult to draw the line between them. It was a heat or ardour of temperament which by meeting with much opposition in pursuing a measure that he had once satisfied himself was right, sometimes in its support became zeal, sometimes irritability, sometimes passion. "Exquisite powers," writes Lord Buchan in a Letter to Bonomi the artist, in allusion partly to Mr. Burke, "has its root in exquisite sensibility." And this peculiar sensitiveness of genius has been so often noted one of its marked features, that perhaps we are scarcely at liberty to lament what appears to possess some occult connexion with its very excellence. Frequent observation proves, that some of the strongest minds are under the dominion of very powerful feelings and passions, and by the stimulus which these supply to the reason, enable it to accomplish much which minds equally great, without such strong excitements, would be unable or afraid to attempt. Thus Melancthon never could have done the work of Luther, Calvin, or Knox. Thus Mr. Fox or Mr. Pitt, in all probability, could not have excited the public mind on the American war as Mr. Burke by the variety of his powers and passions excited it; it is almost certain that they could never have rendered popular the trial of Mr. Hastings, as was done at least for a time by him; it is unquestionable that it was not within the range of the powers of either, singly to influence the nation as he influenced it on the question of the French Revolution. Men constituted like him are peculiarly cut out by nature for important and trying exigencies. He has a remark himself somewhere, that "a vigorous mind is as necessarily accompanied with violent passions as a great fire with great heat." "Strong passion," said he at another time, and the observation displays much knowledge of character, "under the direction of a feeble reason feeds a low fever, which serves only to destroy the body that entertains it. But vehement passion does not always indicate an infirm judgment. It often accompanies, and actuates, and is even auxiliary to a powerful understanding; and when they both conspire and act harmoniously, their force is great to destroy disorder within and to repel injury from abroad." "No revolution (in public sentiment,) civil or religious," says Sir Gilbert Elliott, writing in 1758 to the historian Robertson, "can be accomplished without that degree of ardour and passion which in a later age will be matter of ridicule to men who do not feel the occasion and enter into the spirit of the times."

---

* Letter to a Noble Lord.

Useful as this peculiar frame of mind is—and nothing great was ever accomplished without it—it is frequently prejudicial when carried into the discussion of ordinary affairs, or the common routine of opposition in the House of Commons, as Mr. Burke himself now and then experienced. It sometimes led him to undue warmth and positiveness in matters of inferior moment, which by seeming to master his temper, was also believed by those who did not know him well to bias his judgment. To many who neither saw so far nor so clearly into the tendency of measures as himself, it had the appearance of arrogance; to many, of dictation, obstinacy, or intractibility. It gave rise not unfrequently to illiberal surmises that he must have some personal interest in what he urged with so much heat and pertinacity; and impaired the effect of his eloquence in the opposite benches of the body whom he had to address, by an opinion, however unjust, that his views at times sprang from momentary passion or impetuosity rather than from mature deliberation. Convinced in his own mind of being right, he was somewhat impatient of not being able to convince others equally soon: he did not perhaps make sufficient allowance for inferior understandings, for duller apprehensions, for more defective information; or always consider that as even obvious truths are of slow progress among the mass of mankind, so political truth, as involving a greater variety of interests, is received with still more caution from those who do not possess power. He was early informed of this peculiarity in his public temperament, and expresses an intention to amend it so far back as 1777: the passage which is remarkable for advising Mr. Fox to beware of the same error, is contained in the letter written to him to Ireland—"I remember some years ago when I was pressing some points with great eagerness and anxiety, and complaining with great vexation to the Duke of Richmond of the little progress I made, he told me kindly, and I believe very truly, that though he was far from thinking so himself, other people could not be persuaded I had not some latent private interest in pushing these matters, which I urged with an earnestness so extreme and so much approaching to passion. He was certainly in the right. I am thoroughly resolved to give both to myself and to my friends less vexation on these subjects than hitherto I have done; much less indeed. If *you* should grow too earnest, you will be still more inexcusable than I was. Your having entered into affairs so much younger ought to make them too familiar to you to be the cause of much agitation." On another occasion he adverted in the House to his peculiarity—"an earnest and anxious perseverance of mind which with all its good and all its evil effects is moulded into my nature." In private life it was never offensive, and only visible when employed in pushing the interests of his friends or in the duties of humanity.

CHAPTER XV.

Contemporary Opinions entertained of Mr. Burke.—His Eloquence.—His Writings.—His leading Principles as a Statesman.—Mr. Burke, Mr. Fox, Mr. Pitt.

OPINIONS FORMED OF MR. BURKE.

IN adverting to a few of the features which particularly marked the mind of this eminent man, there are to be found in them peculiarities which distinguish him from most others; qualities which are almost inconsistent with each other, or which have been so seldom conjoined in any one person as to be thought inconsistent; a variety almost unbounded, a brilliancy which imposes upon the imagination, a solidity which convinces the judgment, a fancy singularly excursive in pursuit of striking and alluring figures, the presents of genius to the service of persuasion and truth, and a wisdom which when employed in the affairs of mankind was rigidly pinned down to the plain and straight-forward, and that which was founded upon experience and practice. This is so unusual a combination that perhaps another instance is not to be found. He not merely excelled all his contemporaries in the number of his powers, but some in the peculiar excellence belonging to each; a tolerable poet even while a boy, a penetrating philosopher, an acute critic, and a judicious historian when a very young man, a judge of the fine arts whose opinions even Reynolds valued, a political economist when the science was scarcely known here or known to very few, a statesman often pronounced one of the wisest that ever adorned our country, an orator second to none of any age, a writer of extraordinary powers on every subject, and on politics the first for depth and eloquence in our language; and in addition to these, possessed of a vast and multifarious store of knowledge of which all who had any intercourse with him, whether friend or opponent, have spoken in terms of strong admiration and surprise. Like the celebrated Berkeley, Bishop of Cloyne, whose philosophy regarding matter he had once set himself the task to refute, there was nothing useful of which he could be said to be ignorant.

The testimony borne to his talents and acquirements during so many years by Dr. Johnson, a few of which have been repeated in this work, and more are to be found in Boswell's amusing volumes, would alone stamp the fame of any man. Even while travelling in the Hebrides, this favourite topic of the great moralist was not forgotten: "I do not," said he to Boswell, alluding to what he considered inferior minds who had acquired a lead they did not deserve in public affairs, "grudge Burke being the first man in the House of Commons, for he is the first man every where."

Lord Thurlow, after so many years of political bickerings, and whose judgment in consequence was not likely to be biassed by undue partiality, spoke a language not less strong when in a private company where there was some allusion to the comparative merits of the three great orators and statesmen of the age, he observed,—"The name of Burke will be remembered with admiration, when those of Pitt and Fox will be comparatively forgotten."

The celebrated Mirabeau was known to speak of him more than once with great applause, and what was more singular, delivered in the National Assembly on several occasions large passages, with some trivial alterations, from the printed speeches and writings of Mr. Burke, as his own; on being reproached with this once, he admitted the fact, apologising for it by saying, that he had not had time to arrange his own thoughts on some of the many topics he was obliged to discuss, and that in no other productions could he find such an union of argument and eloquence.

As coming from the pen of the scarcely less celebrated opponent of Mirabeau, the following possesses much interest; it was at first attributed to Peltier, but was really written by M. Cazalés;—"Died at his house at Beaconsfield, with that simple dignity, that unostentatious magnanimity so consonant to the tenour of his life and actions, the Right Honourable Edmund Burke. There never was a more beautiful alliance between virtue and talents. All his conceptions were grand, all his sentiments generous. The great leading trait of his character and that which gave it all its energy and its colour, was that strong hatred of vice which is no other than the passionate love of virtue. It breathes in all his writings; it was the guide of all his actions. But even the force of *his* eloquence was insufficient to transfuse it into the weaker or perverted minds of his contemporaries. This has caused much of the miseries of Europe; this has rendered of no effect towards her salvation the sublimest talents, the greatest and rarest virtues that the beneficence of Providence ever concentred in a single character for the benefit of mankind. But Mr. Burke was too superior to the age in which he lived. His prophetic genius only astonished the nation which it ought to have governed."

Mr. Windham, who was his devoted friend and admirer, often expressed similar sentiments, and in the same spirit as the concluding sentence of the preceding passage, wrote in a private letter about this time, what as a Minister it would not perhaps have been quite so decorous towards his coadjutors to say in public: "I do not reckon it amongst the least calamities of the times, certainly not among those that affect me least, that the world has now lost Mr. Burke. Oh! how much may we rue that his counsels were not followed! Oh! how exactly do we see verified all that he has predicted."

On the first allusion to the French Revolution in 1790, Mr. Fox said that his reverence for the judgment of his right honourable friend was unfeigned; for that if he were to put all the political information he had gained from books, all that he had learned from science, and all that the knowledge of the world and its affairs had taught him, into one great scale, and the improvement he had derived from the conversation and instruction of his right honourable friend in the other, the latter would preponderate." Some time afterwards, he repeated that "from him he had learned nearly all his political knowledge." At the moment of their disunion he observed, "that however they might differ on present matters, he must still look to his honourable friend as his master;" adding upon the same occasion, "He must again repeat that all he ever knew of men, that all he ever read in books, that all his reasoning faculties informed him of, or his fancy suggested to him, did not impart that exalted knowledge, that superior information, which he had acquired from the lessons of his right honourable friend. To him he owed all his fame, if fame he had any. And if he (Mr. Fox) should now or at any time prevail over him in discussion, he could acknowledge his gratitude for the capability and pride of the conquest in telling him—

'Hoc ipsum quod vincit id est tuum.'"

At the moment of proposing his interment in Westminster Abbey, he again repeated the same acknowledgments in terms which, in the words of a Member in attendance, "drew tears from every one present who had any feelings at all, or could sympathise in the excellence of the great genius then before them, or with the still greater excellence of the genius who had departed."

"Burke," said Mr. Gerard Hamilton (whom Mr. Grattan pronounced a great judge of men and things,) at the period of their greatest coolness, "understands every thing but gaming and music. In the House of Commons I sometimes think him only the second man in England; out of it he is always the first." The unknown author of the 'Pursuits of Literature,' who seems to have no other point of agreement with Dr. Parr, agrees with him at least in rapturous eulogy of Mr. Burke, in a variety of passages of his work, in verse and in prose, in Greek, in Latin, in English, and in no ordinary terms, 'First in the East,' 'Regent of Day,' 'Luminary of Europe,' 'great and unequalled man' "who opened the eyes of the whole nation to the systems of internal destruction and irreversible misery which awaited it, and who only displayed them to confound and wither them by his powers," adding the praise of Paterculus to Cicero—

"Animo vidit, ingenio complexus est, eloquentia illuminavit."

"Let me," says Dr. Parr, "speak what my mind prompts of the eloquence of Burke—of Burke, by whose sweetness Athens herself would have been soothed, with whose amplitude and exuberance she would have been enraptured, and on whose lips that prolific mother of genius and science would have adored, confessed the Goddess of Persuasion." "Who is there," adds the same learned critic, "among men of eloquence or learning more profoundly versed in every branch of science? Who is there that has cultivated philosophy, the parent of all that is illustrious in literature or exploit, with more felicitous success? Who is there that can transfer so happily the result of laborious and intricate research to the most familiar and popular topics? Who is there that possesses so extensive yet so accurate an acquaintance with every transaction recent or remote? Who is there that can deviate from his subject for the purposes of delight with such engaging ease, and insensibly conduct his readers from the severity of reasoning to the festivity of wit? Who is there that can melt them if the occasion requires with such resistless power to grief or pity? Who is there that combines the charm of inimitable grace and urbanity with such magnificent and boundless expansion?"

Mr. Curwen, whose political opinions have been already noticed, thus writes of him on viewing Ballitore, the scene of his early acquisitions in knowledge. "The admiration, nay astonishment, with which I have so often listened to Mr. Burke gave an interest to every spot connected with his memory, and forcibly brought to my recollection the profundity and extent of his knowledge, while the energy, warmth, and beauty of his imagery captured the heart and made the judgment tributary to his will. As an orator he surpassed all his contemporaries, and was perhaps never exceeded."

Another Parliamentary contemporary and supporter previous to the French Revolution, but who was so incurably bitten by that event that he has never since recovered a sober understanding, acknowledges, amidst several gross misrepresentations, "The political knowledge of Mr. Burke might be considered almost as an Encyclopedia; every man who approached him received instruction from his stores." "Learning," writes a contemporary of a different stamp, but who nevertheless never voted with him except during the period of the coalition Ministry, "waited upon him like a handmaid, presenting to his choice all that antiquity had culled or invented; he often seemed to be oppressed under the load and variety of his intellectual treasures. Every power of oratory was wielded by him in turn; for he could be during the same evening pathetic and humorous, acrimonious and conciliating; now giving a loose to his indignation and severity; and then almost in the same breath calling to his assistance ridicule, wit, and mockery."

"As an orator," adds another adversary on the question of revolutionary politics, "notwithstanding some defects, he stands almost unrivalled. No man was better calculated to arouse the dormant passions, to call forth the glowing affections of the human heart, and to 'harrow up' the inmost recesses of the soul. Venality and meanness stood appalled in his presence; he who was dead to the feelings of his own conscience was still alive to his animated reproaches: and corruption for a while became alarmed at the terrors of his countenance. Had he died during the meridian of his fame and character he could scarcely have been considered second to any man either of ancient or modern times." The *meridian of his fame and character* means, in this writer's opinion, before he assailed the French Revolution, and the same party all speak the same language; but the rest of the world deem his exertions upon that subject the climax of his reputation and powers.

"His eloquence," said Mr. Wilberforce on another occasion—and it was rarely their lot to agree on political matters—"had always attracted, his imagination continually charmed, his reasonings often convinced him. Of his head and of his heart, of his abilities and of his humanity, of his rectitude and of his perseverance, no man could entertain a higher opinion than he did." To these might be added some hundreds of similar eulogies of his character and powers from inferior men; language indeed has been nearly exhausted in characterising them; and the terms "a vast storehouse of knowledge," "an illustrious man," "a wonderful man," "an unequalled man;" "a mighty man," "an all-knowing mind," "a boundless mind," "an exhausless mind," "the most consummate orator of the age," "the greatest orator and wisest statesman of modern times," occur to the reader of nearly every work, untainted by party spirit, in which he is mentioned.

Much the greater part of these praises were bestowed by persons who knew him, not merely in the casual bustle of political life, but in moments when the statesman was sunk in the social acquaintance; and this is the most valuable species of testimony; for it sometimes happens that a nearer view of public men diminishes much of that wonder we feel at a distance. On the contrary it appears that intimacy with Mr. Burke increased it. His more private friends, who happened to be little or not at all connected with public affairs, and who had the best possible opportunities of probing and exploring the man, loved him the best, and prized him the most. The same feeling existed among his relations. No man, it has been said, is a hero to his valet de chambre, and from the same feeling of familiarity, few men, however great in the estimation of the world, carry the impression of greatness into the bosoms of their own families. But even here, where most unveiled and unreserved, he had the fortune to secure both profound attachment and respect.

Richard his brother, and William Bourke, themselves able men, his companions from youth, the partakers of his fortunes, the participators in many of his studies, who knew if any men could know the value of his mind and the labours bestowed upon its culture, looked up to him with a feeling of veneration. Sentiments of this kind frequently appear in the letters of both. At an early period of his public life, Richard writing to a friend in Ireland thus concludes an eulogium upon him—" Whatever he has is his own; he owes the public nothing, whatever the public may owe to him. It is but just to his character to say that for honour, for integrity, and for ability, no man ever stood higher in public estimation in this kingdom; and I will add, but it is to you that I write, no man ever better deserved it." William Bourke, writing about the same time, speaks the same language, Though no relation of Edmund, and spelling his name originally as it is here spelt, this gentleman was so much attached to him from boyhood, and so proud of the connexion, that, in the language of a friend of the family, " he would have knocked any man down who had dared to dispute the relationship."

The respectful admiration of his son equalled that of his brother and friend. During the last visit to Ireland in 1786, when Mr. Shackleton, after listening attentively to some ingenious and profound observations of the father, turned aside soon afterwards with his son and remarked in conversation " he is the greatest man of the age;" " He is," replied the son, with filial enthusiasm, and a very near approximation to the truth, " the greatest man of any age." Dr. Lawrence whose friendship he valued, and whose talents drew the animated encomium of the late Mr. Whitbread, considered him by far the most eloquent man of the age, and still greater in wisdom than in eloquence. A few living, and many other dead friends expressed the same opinion.

Nothing perhaps more strongly exhibits the homage paid to his vigour of mind than the influence it gave him over the most eminent men with whom political connexion brought him into close contact: over the Marquis of Rockingham, a man of sound talents unquestionably; over Mr. Dowdeswell, and all the ablest of that party; over the Duke of Portland; over Mr. Fox; over Mr. Windham; over all his private friends without exception; over the most distinguished of the Old Whig party now living; over several of the Coalition Ministry; in a considerable degree over Mr. Pitt and his colleagues in 1792, at least as much as the habitual pride, and jealousy of all political talents entertained by the Minister, would permit; and, on nearly all the great questions he embraced, eventually over the whole nation. If it require a strong understanding to gain a leading influence over even the ignorant and the weak, what must that be which subjects to its dominion the enlightened, the powerful, and in talents not merely the great but the vast?

HIS ELOQUENCE.

Of the conception which we have been taught to entertain of what a great and commanding orator should be, whose moral character must be pure; whose knowledge is universal; whose genius animates and adorns his knowledge; whose language flows at will; whose delivery is impressive; whose powers of reasoning and imagination are equally strong; whose presence of mind rarely deserts him; whose readiness so combine all these qualities, or to draw upon each separately, according to circumstances, is unlimited—there is no man in English history who comes near to Mr. Burke. It has been remarked with some truth that his powers, if shared out, would have made half a dozen of good orators. It must at least be regarded as an uncommon coincidence that he should unite in an eminent degree nearly every one of the requisites which the ancients point out as necessary to the character. Others of the great political names of our country possess only two or three of the qualities here enumerated. Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, for instance, equalled him in vigour of reasoning, in judgment, and in fluency; Mr. Sheridan in coolness, promptitude and wit; Lord Chatham had the advantage in bold and indeed overpowering delivery, and, perhaps, Lord Bolingbroke also in some degree; Charles Townshend in a peculiar parliamentary skill in seizing the favourable moment to push a subject, and in the adaptation of his powers to the point at issue, and to the temper of the House; but none of them possessed the combination peculiar to Mr. Burke. Neither had they his originality of thought, his force of language, his striking phraseology, or that inexhaustible fertility upon every topic which constitutes the soul of eloquence, and which, when his opponents had little else to find fault with, they urged against him as a defect. He would seem therefore to have been cut out for a great orator partly by some natural gifts, and partly by having grounded and reared himself upon the model which classic authority recommends. And this must have been done at an early period; led to it probably not so much from any sanguine expectation of ever becoming the character which he admired, as by the expected duties of the profession he at first contemplated, or by that latent instinct which, without knowing precisely whither it tends, so often propels and guides in the pursuits of life.

A distinction may be made, and perhaps hold good, between a great orator and a debater. It has been said, that in the latter respect Mr. Fox acquired the superiority over all men. No speaker certainly was ever heard with more consideration by those opposed to him, or so much partiality by those he led, as well from his unquestioned talents and popularity, as the strong attachment of the latter to his person, which no other political leader has had the fortune to secure. It will nevertheless be difficult to point out where Mr. Burke's presumed inferiority lay. In information, in wisdom upon all great occasions, and in variety of talents, to secure them a favourable reception from his hearers, he had no equal: in readiness and vigour no superior; and he was accused of being frequent and fertile to a fault.

After all, however, it may be doubted whether this great dexterity in debate of Mr. Fox be any just criterion of the highest order of intellect, or whether his style which commonly accompanied it was of the highest style of oratory—that style which is not merely effective in the British Senate, but which commands the admiration of all men of all countries, as the perfection of the art. Judged by this standard he comes much short of Mr. Burke. A good debater, though a character almost wholly English, as there was scarcely any such (their speeches being chiefly written) among the ancients, and little resembling him in the rest of Europe at the present day, is more of a mechanic perhaps than he is willing to acknowledge. His range is commonly narrowed, his aim bounded by local or temporary circumstances, which, though calculated to meet some petty interest or emergency of the moment, often become an obstacle to a very wide expansion of mind; he may be said to move within a moral circle, to work in a species of political tread-mill; and his art has been, and it is but fair to calculate, may be again acquired, at an age when other and higher faculties remain still unfolded. A good debater, therefore, may in a great measure be made. The art of a great and commanding orator, in the highest acceptation of the term, must, like that of the poet, be chiefly born with him.

The oratorical style of Mr. Burke is not only of the very highest order, but it possesses the first characteristic of genius—originality. We have nothing that is very similar to it, and little perhaps equal to it, in our language, though of its nature and power, its vigour and variety, its novelty of thought, and intellectual brilliancy which flashes athwart every subject, and transmutes all objects that it meets with into auxiliaries to his main purpose, a very inadequate idea can be conveyed by description, and no specimen can do it justice. When Johnson was asked whether Mr. Burke resembled Tullius Cicero, "No, Sir," was the reply, "he resembles Edmund Burke." Taken as a whole, however, his manner partakes of the grandeur of the eloquent Roman, with more of richness, of masculine energy, and altogether a greater reach of mind than he displays; though with less of chastity, of elaborate elegance or methodical arrangement, as might be expected in speeches which, unlike those of the great ancient, were not polished into perfection before they were spoken: while in detached passages he sometimes assumes an air of severity, and of that simpler dignity which belongs to Demosthenes, to whom as an orator he gave the preference.

His eloquence will be found less remarkable for the predominance of any one faculty of the mind, than for that distinguishing feature already alluded to—a combination of them all; a peculiarity which has so much confused the judgment of many, and not mean critics, as to give rise to the most contradictory opinions. Some represent him as addressing the passions and imagination more than the understanding; others of overwhelming his subject by pouring in argument much more than enough; some of dealing in that bold, flowing, loose, yet powerful style which they term licentious; others of being often abrupt and severe; some for indulging in too much wit, and ornament, and lighter matter; others for being too metaphysical and refined, and too much above the intellectual level of the assembly he addressed, though that assembly was the House of Commons. Some again have honestly confessed, that after much meditation they can make nothing at all of him—that his qualities contradict each other, and that his powers and his mode of wielding them, are equally indescribable.

All these opinions, it is clear, cannot be true, and the confusion perhaps arises from each viewing him in the light which strikes strongest at the moment; from attending not so much to the whole as to single parts, each of which indeed is so striking in itself, as to appear a principal in the cause in which it is embodied only as an auxiliary. Examine any single oration he has published, that on American Taxation for instance, the first, though perhaps not the best, and the pervading feeling in the mind of the reader after perusal is a conviction of sound, straight-forward sense, ingenious and honest views, moderation of tone, and acute discriminating wisdom in the speaker. Omit the graphic sketches of character if these be deemed extraneous or meretricious, and there is little to offend even a fastidious taste. Nothing whatever flowery (an accusation sometimes laid to Mr. Burke's charge by a confusion of language, though there is not even an approach to such a quality in any one of his speeches or writings;) nothing merely amusing or ornamental; nothing which the plainest understanding may not instantly comprehend; nothing which solicits the imagination for a figure, without the figure strikes hard and home in some form or other upon the argument; but a total of vigour and effect, as on any question which much engaged his attention, that no other modern orator imparts, and which the records of Parliament teach us no other could impart. His great aim, as to manner, in this, as in all his public speeches and his writings, is strength. To this he often sacrifices every minor consideration of elegance or beauty, which were reserved chiefly for his private communications. He approaches to a contest therefore not with two or three, but with that variety of qualities which may be compared to a whole armoury of weapons; and the skill with which they were used, and the consequent difficulty experienced by the ablest opponents in meeting him fully on every point of attack, made him at all times a most formidable assailant in Parliament—a kind of Briareus among political disputants.

To arrive at this result his mind possessed a peculiarly discursive faculty; like a bird of prey upon the wing, it was ever on the watch for something on which to levy contributions. Few things, therefore, whether great or little, whether of nature or art, whether belonging to earth or to a higher region, escape him; he darts upon them without materially impeding his course, or has the rarer art, in most of his deviations, to carry his subject along with him. He seldom indeed stops to select; he grasps at much which a severer judgment would reject, but whatever he seizes he has the art beyond any other man of putting to use, and his progress often reminds us of a torrent sweeping rock and tree and earth along with it, yet acquiring additional power even from the heterogeneous nature of its accumulations. In these however there is very little of common-place. His conceptions, without violent straining, are almost always original. We meet with things in him which are to be found in no other quarter, which are wholly unexpected, and which perhaps scarcely any one ever before imagined, or at least thought of conjoining and adapting to such purposes as he had in view. He has drilled more extraordinary and bold auxiliaries to the art of persuasion than any other orator ancient or modern; and while their novelty creates surprise, we are often at a loss to discover not only how they get into their new situation, but by what dexterity of mental magic they are made to play so conspicuous a part.

At times he seems on the verge of extravagance, not indeed that species of it which excites laughter or contempt, but rather astonishment. Along this dangerous precipice, dangerous in many respects to an ambitious orator or writer, he treads in perfect security, while other, and even eminent men in attempting to pursue his track have not been able to preserve themselves from falling into absurdity, chiefly because they mistake the severe boldness of his occasionally figurative manner, for a flowery manner; than which no two things can be more opposite; the former being the offspring of stronger, the latter in general of looser and weaker intellectual powers. Nothing indeed is more peculiar to his impassioned style than this difficulty of imitation. To be convinced of it, let any one take a page or two of any of our English classics, Addison or Johnson for instance, and aim at hitting off their chief characteristics, and he may probably make the resemblance respectable; let him again attempt those of Burke, and he will almost certainly fail; he will either overdo or underdo it. Even Mr. Sheridan, with all his genius, who had his eye upon this great model in the early part of his career, soon found out that the endeavour was almost hopeless, and therefore prudently gave it up. It is remarkable that Mr. Burke himself more than once experienced that his excellencies were, or were represented, as defects, and that the very number of his talents served as a handle to impair the effect he expected to produce; for there is a large class of auditors to be found in the House of Commons as elsewhere, who think that an argument to be good must be dull, that wit in the course of it is misapplied, and that a flash of genius is a kind of sudden death to the whole process of reasoning —an idea to which even Mr. Pitt with characteristic dexterity was fond of giving countenance, when he had nothing better at hand to offer to the hard-pushing and keen and various powers of his gifted adversary.

It may be true, that in performing the frequent duty of an Opposition leader—that of making an eloquent speech out of little or nothing—he sometimes, on lighter matters at least, delighted to play with his subject; to wanton in the luxuriance of his imagination, wit, and sarcasm; to dally and amuse himself and others on the dull road it was so often his lot to travel, by giving a kind of jubilee to his animal spirits. But his power over the main question was as visible on these as on more serious occasions; it was often termed the "wantonness of eloquence," and might be called the consciousness of mental power; he reminds us of a horse soldier exercising preliminary sabre flourishes over the head of a defenceless enemy on foot, previous to putting him to death. It would be hazardous to pronounce these or any other of his deviations misplaced; for some of the most skilful passages in oratory are those which occasionally glance from the main point to prepare attention for what is to follow. Homer is said to nod, and Burke may occasionally trifle, but both are probably the effects of design. Few subjects admit of continued excitement of mind for a length of time, and few audiences relish for three or four hours together what is called a continued chain of reasoning. Rests are as useful and necessary in a long speech as in a long journey, and their judicious intermixture, as they occasion the least fatigue, are likely to impart the greater pleasure. "To have attained a relish for his (Mr. Burke's) charms," says an eminent critic, "is greatly to have advanced in literature."

Certain peculiarities in his eloquence, such as the strength of imagination, the vehemence, the force of invective, the almost morbid acuteness of feeling (which nevertheless is one of the requisites to an orator to make his hearers also feel,) belong as much perhaps to his country as to the individual. Several of the orators of Ireland exhibit something of the same spirit in the few specimens preserved of their most animated contentions. English Parliamentary oratory, so far as it is preserved, has little of this character. But the specimens are so few and imperfect as to make it difficult to judge; little in fact exists, previous to the commencement of the late reign, which gives us any tolerable idea of the speeches or style of speaking of the great names in our political annals. Even the supposed early effusions of Lord Chatham are well known to derive their chief merit from the pen of Dr. Johnson, who rarely, if at all, heard him speak at that time, and who wrote his and the other speeches, sometimes from a few meagre hints, frequently from none at all, simply from knowing which side of the argument the speakers had taken. Statesmen then contended as if their eloquence was only born to die with the debate of the day; to become for ever extinguished and forgotten in the very spot which gave it birth, leaving to posterity no memorial of their noblest stand against an unconstitutional measure or Minister, but the record of the rejection of the one or the dismissal from office of the other. It is also true what Mr. Burke somewhere observes, that debates a century ago were comparative parish vestry discussions to what they afterwards became. This change, in the general belief, was chiefly owing to himself; he is considered, by the enlarged views, the detailed expositions of policy, the intermixture of permanent truths bearing upon temporary facts, and the general lustre and air of wisdom which he was the first to introduce at large into Parliamentary discussion, greatly to have exalted the character of Parliament itself; and by the display of his own characteristics to have excited the emulation of others. No comparison at least can be drawn between the tone and value of Parliamentary eloquence, previous to his appearance there and since.

As an accuser, his power was truly terrific; he has exhausted the whole compass of the English language in the fierceness of his invective and the bitterness of his censure; for even Junius, with all the advantages of indiscriminate personality, private scandal, and the mask under which he fought, has not exceeded him in severity, while he falls infinitely short of him in reach of thought, command of language, energy of expression, and variety of reproach. Junius is more pungent in his assaults, Mr. Burke more powerful; Junius imparts the idea of keenness, Mr. Burke of force; Junius of possessing powers to a certain degree circumscribed, Mr. Burke of a magnitude nearly boundless; Junius hews down his victim with a double edged sabre, Mr. Burke fells him with a sledge hammer, and repeats his blow so often, and in so many different modes, that few can again recognise the carcass he has once taken it in hand to mangle.

Much of this wrathful spirit arose from what he thought tyranny or crime, where great public offences or great supposed culprits were in question, and when he conceived himself bound to summon up every faculty he possessed not merely to overpower but to destroy them. In reply to the attack of the Duke of Bedford, though he curbs much of his natural vehemence from the provocation being personal to himself, there is great vigour, with something of a lofty contempt of his opponent. But few, if any, records of exertions by one man equal in labour and talents those against the French Revolution and Mr. Hastings. Against the latter his speeches were heard with an awe approaching to terror; by some their severity has been censured, but their apologies, to which little can be added, were volunteered at the moment even by two political adversaries, Mr. Pitt and Mr. Wilberforce.*

---

* The latter, in an animated address, said, he did not wonder at the mind of Burke being warmed, and his feelings excited, by the nature of the supposed crimes of the accused; for he was aware of the transactions in India before almost any one else; he had been brooding over them for years; and it was natural for him to see their enormity in a magnified point of view. Mr. Pitt, (9th May, 1787,) "admitted that he was once of opinion that the language of *those who chiefly promoted the present proceeding* was too full of acerbity, and much too passionate and exaggerated; but when he found what the nature of the crimes alleged was, and how strong the presumption that the allegations were true, he confessed that he could not expect that gentlemen, when reciting what they thought actions of treachery, actions of

In the more mechanical part of oratory—delivery, his manner was usually bold, less graceful than powerful, his enunciation vehement and unchecked by any embarrassment, his periods flowing and harmonious, his language always forcible, sometimes choice, but when strongly excited by the subject, acrimonious and sarcastic, his epithets numerous, and occasionally strong or coarse; his invective furious, and sometimes overpowering, and to the last he retained much of the Irish accent, which, in the opinion of many, materially marred the power of his eloquence. At times his gesticulation was violent, his tone harsh, and an habitual undulating motion of the head (which is alluded to in the lines before quoted from Simpkin's Letters) had the appearance of indicating something of a self confident or intractable spirit; he seemed as if he would command as well as persuade the auditors of the opposite benches, and the effect proved occasionally disadvantageous to his views.

His speeches, though always abounding in instructive and ingenious matter, were sometimes, like those of Mr. Fox, too long, both orators sinning in this respect from a fulness of mind which, having once begun to disburthen itself, appeared inexhaustible. Three hours from each being a common effort, left nothing for any one else on the same side to say. Some Members expressed discontent at being thus thrown into the shade, particularly those of Opposition after the quarrel on the French Revolution, when one of the principal is said to have complained of Mr. Burke being too much of a monopolist in this way, though he admitted him to be "undoubtedly

---

violence and oppression, and demanding an investigation into those actions, should speak a language different from that which would naturally arise from the contemplation of such actions."

the best informed man in either House of Parliament, the most eloquent man, and frequently the wittiest man." There are moments indeed when the best speakers, especially out of power, cannot obtain an attentive hearing from hungry and impatient auditors; a debater must often wait for the *mollissima tempora fandi;* and the great subject of this sketch himself particularly commends Charles Townshend's skill in this respect, as "hitting the house between wind and water."

A description of the manner as well as of the power of Mr. Burke in debate, by the Duke de Levis, is interesting as coming from a foreigner; the remarks on his dress will be thought not a little characteristic of a Frenchman's constitutional attachment to show and effect in opposition to English plainness and simplicity. The occasion was a debate on the French Revolution :—

"The man whom I had the greatest desire to hear was the celebrated Mr. Burke, author of the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, and often himself sublime. At length he rose, but in beholding him I could scarcely recover from my surprise. I had so frequently heard his eloquence compared to that of Demosthenes and Cicero, that my imagination associating him with those great names had represented him to me in a noble and imposing garb. I certainly did not expect to find him in the British Parliament dressed in the ancient toga; nor was I prepared to see him in a tight brown coat, which seemed to impede every movement, and above all the little bob-wig with curls. * * * In the mean time he moved into the middle of the House, contrary to the usual practice, for the members speak standing and uncovered, not leaving their places. But Mr. Burke, with the most natural air imaginable, with seeming humility, and with folded arms, began his speech in so low a tone of voice that I could scarcely hear him. Soon after, however, becoming animated by degrees, he described religion attacked, the bonds of subordination broken, civil society threatened to its foundations; and in order to show that England could depend only upon herself, he pictured in glowing colours the political state of Europe; the spirit of ambition and folly which pervaded the greater part of her governments; the culpable apathy of some, the weakness of all. When in the course of this grand sketch he mentioned Spain, that immense monarchy which appeared to have fallen into a total lethargy, 'What can we expect,' said he, 'from her? mighty indeed, but unwieldy—vast in bulk, but inert in spirit—a whale stranded upon the sea shore of Europe.' The whole house was silent; all eyes were upon him, and this silence was interrupted only by the loud cries of hear! hear! a kind of accompaniment which the friends of the speaking Member adopt in order to direct attention to the most brilliant passages of his speech. But these cheerings were superfluous on the present occasion; every mind was fixed; the sentiments he expressed spread themselves with rapidity; every one shared his emotion, whether he represented the ministers of religion proscribed, inhumanly persecuted and banished, imploring the Almighty in a foreign land to forgive their ungrateful country; or when he depicted in the most affecting manner the misfortunes of the Royal Family, and the humiliation of the daughter of the Cæsars. Every eye was bathed in tears at the recital of these sad calamities supported with such heroic fortitude. Mr. Burke then, by an easy transition, passed on to the exposition of those absurd attempts of inexperienced men to establish a chimerical liberty; nor did he spare the petulant vanity of upstarts in their pretended love for equality. The truth of these striking and animated pictures made the whole

House pass in an instant from the tenderest emotions of feeling to bursts of laughter; never was the electric power of eloquence more imperiously felt; this extraordinary man seemed to raise and quell the passions of his auditors with as much ease, and as rapidly, as a skilful musician passes into the various modulations of his harpsicord. I have witnessed many, too many political assemblages and striking scenes where eloquence performed a noble part, but the whole of them appear insipid when compared with this amasing effort."

Considerable difference of manner may be observed in his speeches and writings, the former having a more rapid, vehement, freedom of style, throwing off shorter and less finished, though not less spirited sketches than the latter; there is likewise more aim at effect, the sentences shorter and more epigrammatic, and the subject on the whole more condensed. A belief prevailed for a short time in the early part of his career of their being written previous to delivery—an impression arising from their admitted superiority over those of his contemporaries; but this was not the case. He meditated deeply, and was sometimes heard to express his thoughts aloud. On new, or very important questions, he occasionally committed some of the heads of his argument to paper, but for the language, the colouring, and illustration, he trusted to a well-stored mind, a retentive memory, and a readiness which, from constant discipline in the school of debate, never failed him. As to his public speeches we have the authority of Gibbon who heard them, as well as of still more intimate friends, for saying they received no embellishments in passing through the press. It is well known indeed that the fragments preserved of several were written down *after* and not *before* delivery, assisted by the notes and recollection of different Members, and not unfrequently of the public reporters.

HIS WRITINGS.

Next to the thirst for oratorical renown, perhaps quite equal to it in degree, Mr. Burke aimed at acquiring weight and celebrity by his pen, seeming to think fame in the senate of inferior value until stamped by the approving seal of the press. Avaricious of excellence, he grasped at superiority in both pursuits, desirous to show the world that though in a series of 2000 years (with the single exception of Lord Bolingbroke, if he can be deemed an exception) one of them had been found sufficient for the faculties of any one man, he at least possessed the ability to write with, if possible, still more power than he could speak. Of this sort of distinction he felt that no superior party influence, no jealousy, no misrepresentation, could deprive him; for the world at large is a tolerably impartial tribunal.

Yet as men have an obvious aversion to the union of excellencies in any one person, the moment he was pronounced the greatest writer of the age—a verdict which none has withheld—some attempts were made to question, what was never questioned before, his power in the House of Commons, exemplifying the remark of Dr. Parr when speaking of him; " There is an unwillingness in the world to admit that the same man has excelled in various pursuits: yet Burke's compositions, diversified as they are in their nature, though each excelling in its kind, who does not read with instruction and delight?" When this was written the French Revolution had not taken place, and consequently half his strength remained unknown. That event drew it forth with indescribable effect. He had to contend with much of the political, and by far the greater part of the literary strength of the country, at least that portion of which was seen most frequently in the press, without a single second, of even moderate talents, in the literary class to assist him, yet he overpowered them all; his arm was indeed irresistible; in the general opinion no other allies* were necessary, for aid was more likely to enfeeble than to support him— and the advice therefore of an acute writer was literally followed:—

> "—————— In resistless prose,
> Leave Burke *Alone* to thunder on our foes."
>
> *Pursuits of Literature.*

It was early remarked among his characteristics that to a perseverance not to be overcome, to the greatest original genius, and to extraordinary acquirements, he joined in the discussion of a subject unusual comprehensiveness of outline with minute knowledge and accuracy of detail. The reader of his Works will be frequently led to the same consideration by observing his eagerness to embrace the whole of a subject, to leave no part of it unsifted, to place it in every variety of light, and apply every possible illustration; to turn it back and front, inside and out, upside and down, so that no point likely to afford aid to the investigation of truth shall pass unexamined. This, which is one of the first merits of a fair disputant, was also his natural disposition. He cannot bear, apparently, to blink or narrow a question, even when doing so may be supposed favourable, to his views, but sometimes gives the first hint of a difficulty in order show his skill in overcoming it. It is contrary to the nature of the man to be pent up within a small compass; he must have room; give him vent or he continually threatens to explode and overwhelm you. He can no more be thrust up into the straitened corner of a subject —a trick which the practised debater and reasoner plays off on the more inexperienced—than you can squeeze an elephant into the cage of a parrot; for the cast of his frame is too ponderous, and his perceptions too acute, to submit to be caught in a trap which is commonly set to hamper the unwary. He seldom takes a topic in hand without so far exhausting it that we find little interest, and frequently very little profit, in following any one else in the same track of argument.

---

* An anecdote of one of the ablest, exhibits another instance of Mr. Burke's characteristic kindness. The present Serjeant Goold, of the Irish bar, then an aspiring but briefless barrister, excited by admiration of the "Reflections on the Revolution in France," and of their great author, and then lately returned from Paris, where he had witnessed the *practical effects* of the new system of liberty, wrote a reply to several of Mr. Burke's assailants. At this time he was wholly unknown to the latter Some time afterwards, however, he received in Dublin a letter from him, stating that he had not forgotten his obliging pamphlet, and that he begged leave to return the favour by giving him an introduction that might be serviceable to his interests; for Earl Fitzwilliam, the new Lord Lieutenant of Ireland, being to spend a few days with him at Beaconsfield before his departure, if he would come over and join the party he might find the excursion neither unpleasant nor unprofitable. Mr. Goold, after some difficulty in raising the *material* for the journey, came, but too late; the society of such a man, however, well compensated the trouble; and he returned to Dublin with such letters of introduction as would have had due weight, had the noble Earl continued in that government.

One of his chief excellencies is in being an original and profound thinker. He continually strikes out something which is either new, or new in the connexion in which it stands, and has contrived to throw together more numerous and important political truths, intermixed with a great variety of moral truths drawn from acquaintance with the world, than any other writer on public affairs. The same profundity of thought which qualifies him to make so many discoveries in his progress, enables him also to dispel errors. He traces a proposition up to its source, and from its source through all its ramifications, so that if there be a fallacy in any part he is pretty sure to detect it. Axioms and opinions relative to our domestic politics, which were scarcely ever before doubted, are no sooner touched by him than they prove to be weak or questionable: several which might be mentioned he has wholly overthrown.

The desire thoroughly to clear the way before him, to afford the fullest information, and to leave nothing unexplained or unanswered, has given rise to the charge of his being diffuse. Diffuseness, however, implies something of weakness and verbosity; and he must be a hardy critic who shall venture to declare that these are in any degree characteristic of his writings. He may be full; unnecessarily so perhaps in the opinions of some, but this abundance presents ample matter for the exercise of the understanding; there is no accumulation of sentences to spin out a thought, no mere verbiage; but on all occasions a corresponding influx of ideas which open out great truths, enlarge the bounds, or add to the particulars, of knowledge, or unveil the latent springs of human passions and actions as they operate on those human institutions which so much of his life was employed in improving or defending; and make us not merely wiser politicians but much wiser men.

We rise from the perusal satisfied that we have not spent our time in discussions merely applicable to temporary or party interests. There is a conviction of knowing what we did not know before, of feeling something which we did not before feel, like permanent enlargement of mind; and this probably arises from the influence of that combination of qualities which constitute his peculiar greatness; by finding blended genius with knowledge; elegance of exposition with depth of thought; ingenuity with perseverance; principles with facts; philosophy with practical politics; maxims of abstract wisdom, with those of his own experience among men, serving to bear upon, to illustrate, and to explain each other. To this task the mere politician, or the mere philosopher, would have been wholly incompetent; it is the rare union of the characters which gives the great value to his writings, causing them to be quoted every night in both Houses of Parliament, as the greatest authority of our time. And the testimony cannot well be disputed as partial, when it is borne by Whigs and Tories, by Ministry and Opposition, by all grades in political opinion, Lords Grenville, Londonderry, and Erskine, and every other man of talents and celebrity, having *united* (in this instance at least if in no other) to pronounce them, in their place in Parliament, immortal.

Their influence upon the public mind at large has long been admitted. To them we owe not only much of that system of policy which has saved England and all Europe from that subjugation which France, whether influenced by National Convention, Directory, Consuls, or Emperor, attempted, but also the chief arguments in support of that policy urged in Parliament during the last twenty years. On a variety of other great questions of national interest, Mr. Burke's influence is nearly as great. He has anticipated much of what is daily urged on such subjects, and many even of the most brilliant passages, in the very best speeches in both Houses, whether in reasoning or in rhetorical art and address, are immediately obvious to the diligent reader of his Works, as but repetitions of his thoughts and manner; sometimes in his own language, often with little variation, the speakers probably not aware at the moment of the source whence they borrow.

The same remark applies to several of our popular writers, miscellaneous as well as those devoted to the discussion of public affairs—pamphletteers, reviewers, and political essayists. His Works form their chief stock in trade, the mine from which is dug out their most sterling one, the aliment on which they exist; the bread and beef, and wine, on which they daily feed and fatten; his ideas dissected out of their connecting positions, and hashed up in some new form to suit the particular tastes of the writers, or the voracious appetite of the public, for something new and strong and striking, but still substantially his ideas. Few have grace enough fully to acknowledge their obligations.

His phraseology is another characteristic and popular feature on which contributions are levied in all the popular publications of the age, to an extent of which many readers have little conception. They are of a very original cast, unusually forcible, expressive, and often condense much meaning within a small compass. In the use of epithets he is too free and unguarded; they were mostly the offspring of vehement feeling in debate, but at any time, perhaps, form a weak point in oratory, as being open to the charge of exaggeration, or to contradiction, reprehension, and sometimes to ridicule.

He is almost the first of our writers (Junius it will be remembered was a contemporary) who has thrown the rays of genius and eloquence over political discussion; previous to his time, a political book, and a dull book were nearly synonymous terms. Lord Bolingbroke is perhaps the only exception, though many do not admit him to be an exception, as his writings, political and philosophical, are nearly forgotten; and he has neither the firm ground-work in truth, the vigour of reasoning and language, or variety and splendour of genius of Mr. Burke, who excels in communicating much information, with little sense of fatigue to the mind, subjects not in themselves of the most enlivening description, acquiring spirit and vivacity under his management; for while his argument clears the road, his flashes of genius and his wit enliven, his imagination adorns it. Scarcely any other man but himself could have produced such speeches on the unpromising topics of economical Reform, and on the debts of the Nabob of Arcot.

A minute critic may find in the Works of Mr. Burke traces of three, or even more different sorts of styles, or shades of the same style. The Letter to a Noble Lord, a considerable part of the Reflections on the Revolution in France, and large portions of his Speeches, may be taken as specimens of a highly poetical and impassioned style: the Thoughts on the Discontents, the Letter to the Sheriffs of Bristol, to Sir Hercules Langrishe, and others on Irish and French Affairs, with the Thoughts on Regicide Peace; and perhaps the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful, as coming under the denomination of his middle style: the Charges against Mr. Hastings, which are drawn up with uncommon skill, the Addresses to the King, and to the Americans, on the proposed Secession from Parliament, the Historical Articles in the Annual Register for several years, and his Abridgment of English History, as his plainest or grave style. The Vindication of Natural Society, and the Account of the European Settlements in America, differ perhaps in some degree from each of these as well as from each other.

His letters belong to his plain style. In nothing are his powers more evident than in his correspondence kept up with the most eminent men in the country, and with a few foreigners of distinction, some of which have been already published, and others of high character are to appear; though few can be expected to exceed the letters to Barry. They partake generally of much of the instructive character of his writings, and the same force of observation, often expressed with more elegance than he employs in his publications; some of them amount almost to disquisitions on the subjects they touch, especially on public affairs and on criticism, without losing materially in ease. In vivacity, which many esteem the chief recommendation of a familiar letter-writer, he is deficient, evidently not from want of power, but of inclination to deal in mere pleasantry upon paper; his aim was rather to inform than to amuse.

Allusions have been made to a vulgar and frequent error—frequent at least among those who know little of the original, or who confound two things essentially different—that his style is flowery. Not only is this not the case, but it may be questioned whether it can be called an ornamented style, all the common characters of such a style being at variance with those which distinguish the productions of Mr. Burke. It may rather be termed an impassioned style, the product of ardent genius and strong feeling, studded with some bold figures, not *laid on* for the sake of ornament, but springing out of the intensity of his conceptions; meant not to adorn, but to convey a more perfect image to the mind. Of these figures much is occasionally said; they are, however, less remarkable for number than for a certain daring originality of feature found in no other orator, and which, while they sink deep into the mind, are often recalled by memory as things worthy of recollection, when the same idea expressed in common language would have been forgotten as soon as heard. A figure, therefore, such as Mr. Burke commonly uses, is much more than an ornament; it is an appeal to the judgment through the attractive medium of the imagination; he scarcely ever in using them aims at the beautiful; almost always at the great, the striking, the sublime; often eminently happy in their nature, now and then, though rarely, rather strained, occasionally unseemly, but always forcible.

He deals sparingly in antithesis, scarcely ever in climax; sometimes in personification and apostrophe; in interrogatory he is often powerful, but his taste in pursuing a simile too far may at times afford matter for dispute. His favourite and most brilliant figure is metaphor, and in this he is frequently amenable to criticism from its being imperfect or broken, offending in this way, like all great and original minds, against the strict canons of art, yet overpowering them all by his genius. An instance of this mingled beauty and imperfection may be taken at random. He is alluding to the bickerings with America, excited by Mr. George Grenville, whose character he is sketching, and whom he represents to have understood more of business and of the forms of office on common occasions, than of enlarged and prudent policy on great emergencies—

"These forms are adapted to ordinary occasions, and therefore persons who are nurtured in office do admirably well as long as things go on in their common order; *but when the high roads are broken up, and the waters are out, when a new and troubled scene is opened, and the file affords no precedent*, then it is that a greater knowledge of mankind, and a far more extensive comprehension of things, is requisite, than ever office gave, or than office can ever give." Public discontent and confusion overspreading the country like a vast inundation, and effacing all the beacons which usually guide us, is a noble idea; but something of the metaphorical grandeur is lost by being joined to the literal reality of the "file of office."

An instance of strained metaphor has been already partially quoted in allusion to what he thought the overdone economy of Mr. Pitt, in some regulations proposed in 1785—"He (Mr. Pitt) chooses to suppose (for he does not pretend more than to suppose) a naked possibility that he shall draw some resource out of crumbs dropped from the trenchers of penury; that something shall be laid in store from the short allowance of revenue officers overloaded with duty, and famished for want of bread; by a reduction from officers, who are at this very hour ready to batter the *Treasury* with what breaks through stone walls, for an *increase* of their appointments. From the marrowless bones of these skeleton establishments, by the use of every sort of cutting, and of every sort of fretting tool, he flatters himself that he may chip and rasp an empirical alimentary powder, to diet into some similitude of health and substance the languishing chimeras of fraudulent reformation." The metaphorical allusions in the first sentence of this passage are unobjectionable and forcible; in the second they pass into the simile, and appear constrained and unnatural, though applicable most minutely to every part of the character he had given of the bill in the previous portion of his speech: this instance may be scarcely fair, as it is the most constrained figure in his Works.

Trivial imperfections of this kind, amid specimens remarkable for fitness and correctness, detract little from the merit of an orator; abstracted from the subject they may be open to objection, but taken along with it few readers think them worthy of notice, and fewer still would wish them expunged. An imperfect metaphor forms indeed fine food for the indignation of the critic who fastens upon the unhappy offender as he would upon a thief caught in the act of purloining his property, and commonly handles him with little less mercy. But, after all, it may be doubted whether much of this critical horror does not partake of the character of learned trifling; for if we appeal to experience, to the facts furnished every day by the intercourse of life and business, we find that though metaphors are in continual use by all ranks of people, few of them when examined are critically perfect. To be so, they mostly require to be studied, and the most beautiful require it the most. In extemporaneous oratory, such as we usually hear in the British Senate, this is not to be expected; he who would stop in the career of his argument to labour a metaphor with minute point and polish, might gain the reputation of a sensitive critic, but he would probably gain no other. Few writers, perhaps, would desire to see their ideas submitted to the world in their first words, and still greater allowances ought to be made for the orator.

A charge has been brought against him from high authority (Dugald Stewart, Esq.) that though confessedly one of the greatest masters of the English language, he often debases his style by the intermixture of cant and colloquial words and allusions. The fact of such intermixture may be true, but I should draw a different inference from their use; it is but fair at least, before we wholly condemn his practice, to consider his object.

Having sometimes to address a popular assembly, intelligent, and well educated indeed, but still essentially popular, and at other times the public at large, upon topics which intimately concerned the welfare of all, and with which all were, or fancied they were, acquainted, he aimed, as already hinted, at being strong rather than dignified, bold, clear, and intelligible, rather than refined, mastering their opinions by his power rather than by his elegance, omitting nothing which he thought might influence them, and for this purpose calling in the aid of the most familiar, perhaps homely, associations. Like Swift, another of our most powerful writers, he was determined at whatever cost or sacrifice, though he never, like him, descends to gross abuse and coarseness, to make a deep and indelible impression. He conceived deeply and felt strongly, and would not weaken their force by any thing like squeamishness of expression; he was too prone perhaps to the use of the vulgar tongue in epithets, though not in sentiment. Oratory, however, has a license in language which is denied to history, to criticism, to judicial statements and investigations, or to the philosophical treatise; in the former, therefore, if his taste, judged by his own practice, be often faulty, the error probably arose from an exaggerated idea of his privilege, as under the other heads just mentioned, his History, the Essay on the Sublime, and the Articles of Charge against Mr. Hastings, the style is unobjectionable; in the latter indeed so precise and appropriate, that though occupying an octavo volume and a half, I do not remember (what many, from the common idea entertained of Mr. Burke, will scarcely believe) meeting with but one or two metaphorical allusions, and nothing too familiar or colloquial.

It is likewise urged with much more force, that he is too liberal in the use of terms borrowed from art and science, as, though serving to give variety to imagery, they may not be so universally intelligible. It is rare, however, that they are beyond general comprehension; but he certainly levies upon all professions and occupations without scruple; upon the divine, the moralist, the philosopher, the physician, the astronomer, the chemist, the mathematician, the lawyer, the surgeon, the farmer, the soldier, the seaman, and many others, down even to the baker, and butcher, instances of all of which may be collected from his works. His nautical allusions, gleaned probably from Lord Keppel, Sir Charles Saunders, and other intimate naval friends, are numerous, and applied with more propriety than a landsman can usually accomplish; as in "trimming the ship," in "heaving the lead every inch of way I made," a metaphor strongly expressive of the care and caution exerted upon the economical Reform Bill; in lawyers (who are said to bend their eyes by instinct on the peerage) "casting their best bower anchor in the House of Lords," and many others. In surgery, the terms "solution of continuity," and "working off the slough of slavery," may not be so easily understood, as "the broad-cast swing of the arm," of the farmer, and the supposed questions of the agrarian butchers of the Duke of Bedford's acres—"how he cuts up?" "how he tallows in the cawl or on the kidneys."

Another resource for his exuberant genius was the use of scriptural phraseology, sometimes unjustifiably so, certainly without the least idea of irreverence, but to those who did not know him or make allowance for his sallies, conveying something of that impression; as in calling Lord Hillsborough's Letter to the Colonies during the disputes, "a canonical book of ministerial scripture,—the epistle general to the Americans;" "it is good for us to be here;" "brother Lazarus is not dead, but sleepeth;" and many more. If the language of sacred writ be ever admissible in general discussions—and the propriety of the practice is very doubtful—it is perhaps least objectionable when used by a great orator on a great occasion, affecting the general interests of nations, or of large bodies of the community, and when neither the speaker nor the subject is likely to degrade it. Lord Chatham used it frequently. To any one indeed who has a proper relish for a high order of literary beauty, it requires some self denial not to seize upon phrases which seem to stand so opportunely in the way; for they recur continually to the memory, they are in themselves often sublime, always expressive, and have the advantage of being universally familiar.

Add this, however, to his other literary sins—to "his prolific imagination, which, (in the language of Mr. Pitt) had so long been the wonder and pleasure of the House," to his irregular or broken figures, to his occasional dallying with his subject, to the too frequent use of terms of art, to his frequent invective, to the introduction of undignified and colloquial expressions—and to how little do they all amount? On the other hand, where shall we find among orators and statesmen so much depth and originality of thought, fulness of information, variety of diction, vigour of expression, bold and sublime imagery; so much of grandeur* and energy of eloquence, or of beautiful and impressive writing?

HIS LEADING PUBLIC PRINCIPLES.

As a statesman, Mr. Burke's distinguishing policy is to be traced in his speeches and writings. These, as forming a valuable manual for reference to future legislators and ministers of the country, will be consulted for the opinions which they teach, and the difficulties they tend to solve, for their vigour and eloquence as compositions, for clear and enlarged views on great constitutional questions, for a thorough acquaintance with the duties of rulers and subjects in their various relations of obedience and control. To all his ideas on these points universal assent may not be given, nor was their justice always admitted at the time. But experience has proved they were grounded in sound judgment, in a penetrating and prospective spirit—the first qualities beyond all others for those who fill public stations, and for the want of which no others can compensate—and in a wisdom not abstruse or perplexed, but in its application obvious and easy.

---

* "Junius's," somewhere observes an acute critic (Mr. Haslett,) who will not be suspected of undue partiality to Mr. Burke, "is the first of his class, but that class is not the highest. Junius's manner is the strut of a petit-maitre, Burke's the stalk of a giant; if grandeur is not to be found in Burke, it is to be found nowhere."

It was peculiar to him—one of the many distinctions which belonged to his character—that, possessed of a fancy and imagination singularly brilliant, of vast stores of knowledge, of a liberal and philosophical turn of mind, added to having passed much time among books—all the elements which unite to compose a beautiful system-maker and imposing theorist, produced to him a directly opposite effect. He would admit of no innovating speculations into the business of government. He was, if any man was, a practical man. He professed to build, as the wise of all times have done, upon the basis of history and experience. "I prefer the collective wisdom of ages," said he, alluding to Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox, "to the abilities of any two men living;" but this would have done little, without that happy conformation of mind to discriminate between the deductions to be drawn from it; between what to apply to use, and what was inapplicable. He entertained for ancient institutions that respect and admiration which all sober minds feel when these institutions have been productive of good; and as long as the effects continued the same, he disapproved of attempts to alter the practice.

His aim, therefore, in our domestic policy was to preserve things in the main, as they are; for the simple reason that under it the nation had become great and prosperous. Not to shut our eyes to abuse—his whole life, he said, had been spent in resisting and repealing abuses—but to amend deliberately and cautiously; to innovate not at all, for innovation was not reformation; to overturn nothing which had the sanction of time and many happy days in its favour; to correct and perfect the superstructures, but to leave all the foundations, the antiquity of which was a guarantee of their stability in opinion, sacred and unharmed. "The love of things ancient," says Hooker, "doth argue stayedness; but levity and want of experience maketh apt unto innovations." Bacon thought time the great innovator; Mr. Burke seemed to think that in the nice connexions between the supreme authority and the people, he was the chief or only one who could act without exciting jealousy. He did not regard a form of government as good because it was plausible upon paper, but rather looked to its workings; to effects rather than to principles; to benefit to the people, as it was obvious to the sense, rather than to perfection in the theories on which it was believed to be founded. He believed that no material deviation in the mode of governing a community could take place without danger; and the event of the first great political struggle in which he was engaged, evinced the accuracy of this opinion. His constant admonition to England respecting America was—talk not of your abstract rights of government; I hate the very sound of them; follow experience and common sense; desist from the innovation you are now attempting; do as you have always done before, in permitting her to tax herself; and in all ordinary circumstances of the world the effects will be the same—peace, security, and attachment.*

This minute attention to the uses and habits which unite governors and governed, and of which the veneration he expressed for the component parts of our constitution formed a natural part, though represented by the party to whom he stood opposed in 1791, as the effects of a narrow and fettered system, will by others be deemed the strongest proof of enlarged wisdom. The natural frame of his politics indeed was of the most expanded cast. He always contended for a liberal and conciliatory line of conduct in national questions, a disregard of small and temporary benefits for the sake of great and permanent interests, seeming to think that England might lose by selfishness, but never had sustained injury by kindness and generosity. For this reason he would not run the risk of losing the American continent for the sake of a revenue which even, if acquired, he early perceived, could be no more than nominal. From the same spirit he called for concession to the Irish legislature, to her oppressed and restricted commerce, and to her vast body of Roman Catholic subjects: For justice and future security to the people of India; for liberty of conscience to the dissenters; for the relief of small debtors; for the suppression of general warrants; for the abolition of the slave trade; for the extension of the power of juries; for the liberty of publishing the parliamentary debates; for the re-establishment of Mr. Wilkes in his seat for Middlesex; for the enactment of Mr. Grenville's most useful bill, regulating controverted elections, which met with much unaccountable opposition, and found in Mr. Burke one of its ablest supporters; for the *Nullum Tempus* act, securing the property of the subject against dormant claims of the crown; for another which he endeavoured to carry against similar claims of the church; for retrenching the public expenditure without parsimony toward public servants and services, or infringing upon the dignity of the crown; for a more unrestrained system of commercial intercourse; for a more generous policy toward France and the French princes in the earlier part of the war than Mr. Pitt was inclined to show; and in innumerable other instances on record, all indicating love to popular interests, and to the most enlarged and liberal views. In most of these his understanding had the post of honour; it did not follow, but lead the public voice. He had, in fact, an unfeigned contempt for statesmen without "large, liberal, and prospective views," for what he called "mechanical politicians," and "pedlar principles." "Littleness in object and in means," said he, seeming to hint at some of the Ministry or their connexions in 1796, "to them appears soundness and sobriety. They think there is nothing worth pursuit but that which they can handle; which they can measure with a two-foot rule; which they can tell upon ten fingers."

---

* An eminent American, talking not long ago to an acquaintance of Mr. Burke, said, "Had the advice of your illustrious friend been followed at the beginning of our contest, I do not positively say that America at this day would have been yours, though in very wise hands and with concessions to her, even this might have been possible. But I am very sure that our separation would have been more easy, more imperceptible, more good-humoured, and possibly linked together by mutual interests as strongly as by dominion. Burke would have saved your country much bloodshed, above one hundred millions of money, and more than that, prevented a hostile feeling between the nations which may never be allayed."

At no period did he assume the character of what is called a flaming patriot, having on the contrary early declared in the House of Commons "that being warned by the ill effects of a contrary procedure in great examples," (he had the Earl of Bath and some others in his eye at the moment) "he had taken his ideas of liberty very low; in order that they should stick to him, and that he might stick to them to the end of his life." Averse therefore to professions of patriotism, few statesmen paid more attention to the substance; and in pursuing what he thought the true interests of the people, never very eagerly sought, and perhaps never much valued popular applause, especially if to obtain it required the sacrifice of a single principle, or a point of sound wisdom. He did not seem so much openly to despise, as tacitly to consider it a species of testimony to merit which seldom extends its influence to the page of history, where alone the deserts of a great man are justly balanced, and receive their due reward. In the eyes of many he was, so far as his personal interests were concerned, over-tenacious in never surrendering his own to popular opinion.

The same enlightened patriotism, superior to all party considerations, which proffered support to government during the riots in 1780, "when (as he says) wild and savage insurrection quitted the woods and prowled about our streets in the name of reform," brought him forward with irresistible power in the still more fearful crisis produced by the great convulsion in a neighbouring country. There was at all times a gallant spirit, a kind of old-fashioned generosity about Mr. Burke, which, whenever he saw one branch of the constitution, or an order of the community, pressed down or threatened by the others, made him fling himself into the lighter scale, to restore, if possible, the equipoise. Such was his conduct on this most important of all occasions. He thought it his duty to stand in the breach, even if alone; to reason, and, if necessary, to contend with his former companions, misled beyond the line of prudence by the enthusiasm of the moment; to appeal from Philip drunk to Philip sober; to pronounce aloud the warning voice to the people at large, should they labour under the same delusion;—of the mischiefs which, not their neutrality merely, but their good sense and decided hostility were required to prevent. The results were a violent clamour against him for assaulting the cause of liberty. What species of liberty it was which he is said to have assaulted, is never ventured to be explained, but it may be fairly inferred it was that of France in 1793. What the liberty was which he defended and approved is more clear, for he has told us pretty explicitly—it was English liberty—it was that system of things which secured to every order in the state, to the monarchy, the aristocracy, and the people, and to every person within those orders, the full enjoyment of as many rights, as full security, and as much freedom of action, as was consistent with the same rights, the same security, and the same freedom of action, to every other order and individual.

For reprobating the former and supporting the latter he was accused of inconsistency, as if between the practice of France and the practice of England there prevailed the slightest affinity—wide as vice and virtue, as wrong and right asunder. The distinction he drew between them, and the election he made of the latter, required no efforts of subtlety, but were the ordinary results of sound sense and a clear understanding. Attached to the monarchy from principle and conviction, and brought forward in life by the aristocracy, he professed for both a warm though not a "slavish respect," and in the moment of need did them service which never can be repaid, and which ought never to be forgotten. As one sprang from the middle rank of the people he wished to preserve it respectable, unawed by the tyranny (as in France) of the mob. Sincere in the veneration of religion, he contemplated the spoliation of its institutions first, and subsequent extinction, as a principle of belief in that country, with horror. Exemplary in the performance of his social and moral duties, he could not see thom involved in the general ruin of every thing decent and valuable, without the strongest indignation. He was arrived too at an age when the judgment, in matters of government, is out of the reach of crude schemes and more juvenile follies; when the lust of innovation, if it has ever prevailed in the mind, is cooled by the calculations of experience. His practical knowledge of states, and governments, and the conflicting interests and passions of politicians, had been laboriously earned, his observation keen; his powers to combine, analyse, and deduce important truths from the contemplation of the whole, great, as it appeared beyond example. Looking at such a man in the abstract, without previously knowing what part he *did* take, no doubt could be entertained of the part he *would* take.

After all, the greatest and most useful of his many gifts was that capacity to point out consequences, which, going beyond wisdom, became almost prescience. In this point he stands alone; no other statesman has approached him, or is likely so to do, in the exercise of the same faculty. His predictions, though so numerous and various, and which at first, by their boldness, afforded matter for surprise, became, by their fulfilment to the letter in almost every instance, a subject of general astonishment; though the

French Revolution was by no means the first occasion on which this quality was developed. An attentive inquirer will find it marked in most of the great events of his public life.

He lived just long enough to find himself acknowledged the prince of political prophets; to see the reprobation he had ventured to pass on the most remarkable event of modern times more than justified by the horrid scenes to which it had given rise; to confirm the body of the nation in the belief that it had acted wisely, and to convince many of the opposite party their judgment had been wrong. Had he even erred in estimating the dangers which threatened our own institutions, it would be difficult to blame his caution. A government like that of England, commonly upright in design, in the main pure in practice, and under which the people have become great, free, and prosperous, is entitled to our best exertions in moments of peril, notwithstanding trivial errors, which, after all, interfere with no fundamental right of the people, and which it is easier to point out than to remedy. The fabric of all constitutions, and perhaps of our own especially, is valuable only when the materials which compose it are in close union; disunited they are nearly valueless. It was the praise of Mr. Burke to tie them more closely at a moment when the mistakes of some, and the designs of others, threatened to sever them for ever, and by this one merit, which is only one item in a long list of public services, has left a name as imperishable as the country he adorned and saved.

Let it be supposed on the other hand that his mind had been less happily regulated, that his wisdom or patriotism had been less enlarged, that he had fallen in with the views of the theorists, and the mob, in order to render them a stepping stone to place, or even to criminal schemes ; that deluded by a spirit of insane ambition he had led the van, supported by Paine and so many hundreds of other incendiaries and dreamers of no ordinary rank and talents, to batter down the venerable institutions of the land in expectation of rising upon the ruins,—there is little doubt but he might have accomplished such designs. With all his assistance the struggle was arduous ; with his energies exerted against it, we should now probably have no constitution to find fault with, and no country, not an independent one at least, to claim.

As a minister, for the short time he was in office, he was punctual, laborious, and disinterested in an unusual degree. His Reform bill was the most important measure carried through Parliament during the century, whether we consider the actual saving of money, the regulation of office, or the abolition of places which might have been rendered sources of undue influence, or at any rate of suspicion, in the votes of thirty-six Members of the House of Commons—a number almost sufficient of themselves to form a house. That he would have displayed a different spirit if placed in a more leading department of government, there is no reason to believe ; his integrity of purpose was never questioned. It is possible he might not have been popular. He showed too much zeal in urging favourite measures, and zeal in the eyes of the million is suspicious. He exhibited occasionally too much candour in disclosing the whole of his views in public propositions, while some others thought it more prudent to let them slide into the world, like ill-news, piece-meal. And having never adopted a measure of great consequence except after intense consideration, and the clearest conviction of its being right, he could not perhaps have yielded with a very good grace to public opinion, had it set in the contrary way.

MR. BURKE, MR. PITT, MR. FOX.

It may be an object of inquiry among those who look minutely to development of mind, to estimate the relative capacity and powers which these three great statesmen and orators displayed during their career, and the rank which they are likely to hold on the roll of history. No formal parallel will be attempted here; each has his partizans, and each certainly possesses peculiar merits of his own. But as it is not the eminence of one or two faculties, but the general results of various excellence, that forms the criterion by which great men are usually judged and compared by posterity, so as in this view Cicero has been awarded the first place among the Romans, and perhaps Greeks also, Mr. Burke is pretty certain to take the same stand among the moderns. At present indeed, political feelings and partialities may tempt many to question this; he is yet too near our own time. His great competitors have besides left their names as watch-words and rallying points to two great parties in the state, who, inspired by a sense of party honour and consequence, claim the same distinction each for its particular leader. But party feelings, at least towards individuals, seldom outlive the generation they influence; a century, or less, completely dissolves the spell; men begin then to look around them for some better evidences of desert than the possession of temporary power or popularity furnish. Fame indeed is a capricious offering; Milton had little or no reputation as a poet while he lived, and for years afterwards; Dryden, not more then some other writers whose names are sunk in utter obscurity; several men have almost governed our House of Commons, whose claim to such distinction no one now acknowledges; Mirabeau ruled the National Assembly, yet what historian will venture to class him among the good, or the truly great? Even Demosthenes and Cicero during their lives only divided public applause with rivals whom none would now think of placing in comparison.

No man has excelled, or possibly equalled Mr. Pitt in the management of the Cabinet, in a tact for business, in finance, in that uncommon dexterity which adapting itself, though without subserviency, at once to the wishes of the sovereign, and to the fluctuating feelings of the public, never, during so long a period of time, lost the confidence of either. His powers were only exceeded by his prudence.

In no point of ability could Mr. Fox be deemed inferior, and in bursts of overpowering eloquence was considered often to have the advantage. But as a popular idol, as one born to lead a formidable party in Parliament, and to extract out of casual political coadjutors devoted and enthusiastic personal friends, he stood alone, and far above all other men. Mr. Burke never did, and Mr. Pitt, (had it been his lot to labour during his life in the ungracious work of Opposition,) never could have approached, to an equality with him in this respect. His only wants, perhaps, were that caution and moderation in which Mr. Pitt excelled.

Mr. Burke, on the other hand, in addition to displaying an equality with them in their most distinguished characteristics, possessed other and various powers to which they had little pretension; and considering that he had to fight his way in the House of Commons, from comparative obscurity, through vexatious jealousies and difficulties which never thwarted the career of his great competitors, and buoyed up solely by his talents, he accomplished more than they did for fame. A few, and but a few, of his principles of policy have been noticed; the detail belongs to the history of the country, and would require a larger volume than the present to itself. They embraced, during a period of thirty years, the whole of our foreign, colonial, and domestic relations, under every variety of form and situation; his views extremely clear, more enlarged sometimes than those of Mr. Pitt,—more precise and accurate than those of Mr. Fox; and though not infallible, no man has committed so few mistakes, who took so decided a part on such a multiplicity of subjects. It would be a hazardous matter to point out any gift or capacity, as a statesman, in which Mr. Burke was deficient; in foresight, the first and most important of all, he confessedly far excelled his great contemporaries, and all his predecessors.

The same superiority belongs to him in most of the natural and acquired powers necessary to constitute the great orator, and this is not merely the verdict of the *critic*, but he actually exhibited a power over his *audience*, sometimes in the House of Commons, and more than once in Westminster Hall, to which they never attained. Their oratory was often inferior to his in extent of information, and always, in striking illustration, in the impression conveyed to the mind of greater wisdom, in wit and ridicule, in pathos, in imagery, in (an useful but sometimes dangerous power) force of invective, above all in that kindling of genius, called by the critics the eloquence of passion, and which they deem essential to great success. In ordinary business his powers were perhaps less conspicuous than in affairs of importance; his speeches, at such times, imparted something like the idea of an ocean of mind; he did not latterly engage in, or like, the common routine of opposition, but, as has been said of Shakspeare, he was always great when a great occasion called for it.

If in so many requisites, which go to the formation of a distinguished political character, we find Mr. Burke on a level, or above his great rivals in public life, there are others of no slight moment in which comparison tells to their disadvantage.

As a writer, it is scarcely necessary to advert to his vast superiority. Mr. Pitt, indeed, did not seriously contend for the honours of the press; Mr. Fox composed slowly, and with labour, very unlike his mode of speaking, sometimes complaining of the difficulty of the process as almost vexatious; Mr. Burke was rapid in composition, though patient in careful revision, and, independent of mere literary execution, there are more traces of vigour and originality of mind in any one of his pamphlets than in Mr. Fox's History. In the extent of his general knowledge he excelled them both. As a man of general genius (Sir Joshua Reynolds certainly had him in his eye in the definition of that quality,) who seemed capable of surpassing in any pursuit to which he chose to devote his attention, he excelled them. As a philosophical critic, the Essay on the Sublime and Beautiful places him far above them; and in that general truth of deduction from experience and from appearances, whether in the moral, natural, or political world, which constitutes the philosopher, his superiority is equally incontestible. In powers of conversation he far excelled them. In a fine and correct taste for the arts he excelled them. In classical learning he was at least on a par with them; and in classical criticism, though Mr. Fox was an excellent critic, he had perhaps the advantage in depth and ingenuity. Even in epistolary communication, the business of some men, and the occasional occupation of all, the same marked superiority, whether in the familiar letter or the more formal exposition of public business, is as obvious as in any other of his talents. Of his pre-eminence over Mr.

Fox, with whom he has been more particularly compared in the various excellence constituting a very great man, Dr. Johnson, with characteristic precision, stated his conviction in a single sentence; "Sir," said he, alluding to some political opinions of Sir Joshua Reynolds, "he is too much under the influence of the Fox (dog) *star*, and the Irish *constellation.*" Among politicians he is what Michael Angelo is among artists.

Viewed in whatever light, he must always be considered a most extraordinary man—extraordinary in his talents, in his acquirements, in his rise, in his progress, and in his end; for the last efforts of his mind rise in power and in brilliancy over almost any of the preceding. He lived in a momentous time, and seemed made for such an occasion by the delight he felt in strong excitements, and the splendour of the exertions to which they gave rise. He may be considered in politics what the great reformers were in religion, possessed of zeal, powers, and perseverance, altogether boundless, to influence at favourable moments, the minds of men from their customary channels of thought to such as he deemed more advantageous. He was peculiarly fitted for being the great presiding genius of a country, and his great contemporaries should have been his ministers; he should have originated measures, and they have carried them into execution. Public servants, as able as they were, and (if that be any criterion of merit) infinitely more successful, have been often seen in the world, but it has required two thousand years to produce one Cicero and one Burke. Great as his fame is, it is not probably near its height; calculated as he is, in the various characters of statesman, orator, and writer, to descend to a late period of time, to gain in reputation as he recedes from the fleeting animosities and prejudices of the day, and perhaps to excite regret and surprise that we should have had among us the great master-spirit in political prophesying and teaching, and not oftener have profited by his admonitions.

"This I deliberately and steadily affirm," writes a learned man more than once quoted, after an animated eulogy on him as a critic and philosopher, "that of all the men who are, or who ever have been, eminent for energy or splendour of eloquence, or for skill and grace in composition, there is not one who, in genius or erudition, in philanthropy or piety, or in any of the qualities of a wise and good man, surpasses Burke."

"To whom," said Sheridan in his happier moments, "I look up with homage, whose genius is commensurate to his philanthropy, whose memory will stretch itself beyond the fleeting objects of any little, partial, temporary shuffling, through the whole range of human knowledge and honourable aspirations after human good, as large as the system which forms life, as lasting as those objects which adorn it."

ADDENDA.

Page 71—IRISH HISTORY.

THE opinion of Mr. Burke, besides the argument respecting the Irish Records with Hume, of facts being much misrepresented in all historical notices of that country, as an examination of the original documents would show, is stated in the fragments of his tract on the Popery Laws. He calls the Histories of Ireland "Miserable performances;" and adds, "But there is an interior History of Ireland, *the genuine voice of its records and monuments,* which speaks a very different language from these histories—from Temple and from Clarendon; these restore nature to its just rights, and policy to its proper order. *For they even now show to those who have been at the pains to examine them, and they may show one day to all the world,* that these rebellions were not produced by toleration, but by persecution; that they arose not from just and mild government, but from the most unparalleled oppression. These records will be far from giving the least countenance to a doctrine so repugnant to humanity and good sense, as that the security of any establishment, civil or religious, can ever depend upon the misery of those who live under it, or that its danger can ever arise from their quiet and prosperity."—*Burke's Works,* vol. ix. p. 393.

Page 245.—INDIA AFFAIRS.

In June, 1783, Mr. Burke drew up the Ninth Report of the Select Committee of the House of Commons, for inquiring into the administration of justice in the provinces of Bengal, Bahar, and Orissa—a well digested, comprehensive, and instructive document, occupying 262 octavo pages. It embraces the state of the Company as it then stood; their commerce, under the heads of internal and external; and the government exercised under the charter, and under the different acts of parliament, considered under similar heads of internal and external. The conduct of Mr. Hastings, on a variety of occasions, some of which were subsequently formed into charges against him, comes under animadversion; and the curious history is given of offering his resignation as Governor General, through his agent Mr. Macleane, and then utterly disclaiming such resignation, his agent, his own hand writing, containing his instructions to that effect, and even the testimony of two of his personal friends (Mr. Vansittart and Mr. John Stewart) witnesses of the directions given.

The Eleventh Report of the same Committee, drawn up in the same year, is also the production of Mr. Burke, and relates to Mr. Hastings's alleged corrupt receipt of presents.

Page 321.—CHARACTER OF HENRY IV. OF FRANCE.

[The following letter by Mr. Burke, which does not appear in his Works, or in any other volumes connected with him, was addressed to M. Dupont, who complained that the character given of this great monarch in the "Reflections" was somewhat harsh. The passage in question runs thus: "Henry of Navarre was a politic and active prince. He possessed indeed great humanity and mildness; but an humanity and mildness that never stood in the way of his interests. He never sought to be loved without first putting himself in a way to be feared. He used soft language with determined conduct. He asserted and maintained his humanity in the gross, and distributed his acts of concession only in the detail. He spent the income of his prerogative nobly, but he took care not to break in upon the capital; never abandoning for a moment any of the claims which he made under the fundamental laws, nor sparing to shed the blood of those who opposed him, often in the field, sometimes upon the scaffold."]

"SIR,

"Yesterday I had the honour of receiving your letter, in which you desire that I may revise and soften the expressions which I have made use of concerning Henry IV. King of France. I am not at all surprised at your request, for, since your childhood, you have heard every one talk of the pleasing manners and mild temper of that prince. Those qualities have shaded, and almost obliterated, that vigilance and vigour without which he would never have either merited or enjoyed the title of Great. The intention of this is self evident. The name of Henry IV. recals the idea of his popularity; the Sovereigns of France are proud to have descended from this hero, and are taught to look up to him as to a model. It is under the shelter of his venerable name that all the conspirators against the laws, against religion, and against good order, have dared to persuade their King that he ought to abandon all the precautions of power to the designs of ambition. After having thus disarmed, they have resolved to deliver their Sovereign, his nobility, and his magistrates (the natural supporters of his throne,) into the hands of thieves and of assassins. It is a long time since this plot was first formed. It was resolved to put it into execution according to circumstances; and the mode adopted of everywhere suspending the portraits of Henry IV. was one of the means employed for the success of the design—a means truly perfidious, as it holds out snares to the unwary, and catches mankind by the bait of their own virtues.

"Every time that this politic Prince had occasion to deliver one of his insinuating harangues (which was very often,) he took particular care not to be too literal in his expressions. It was, I suppose, to a kind of assembly of notables that he spoke of his design to free himself entirely from their restraint. But when he employed these courtly threats, of which by the bye he was very liberal, he advanced his right foot, and, as he himself says, 'always clapped his hand upon the hilt of his sword.' Those men, whose power is envied, and against whom violent factions are formed, cannot with safety be good in any other manner. Trajan, Marcus Aurelius, and all others in similar situations, who have dared to be virtuous, could never have enjoyed this arduous and critical pre-eminence but by inviolably pursuing all the means in their power of attracting respect, and of sustaining their authority. Without this, they could not have exercised their benevolence. In such a situation a Prince may with safety, and with as much sagacity as glory, divide his authority with his people, because then he has the power to divide it at his discretion, and is not forced to abandon it.

"Whatever may be the honour annexed to such a voluntary division, whatever may be the political motive that can induce a Sovereign to make such a sacrifice in certain cases, Henry IV. neither did the one nor the other; he never in any manner whatever parted with an atom of his authority. Did he ever leave it to the judgment of the citizens of Paris to determine the right which the laws of the kingdom gave him, of being their King and their Sovereign? Did they ever enter into any treaty with him concerning his title to the throne? Where is there in the long catalogue of the unlimited prerogatives of the King of France (be they just or unjust) an article which he ever abandoned, limited, or even submitted to inquiry? He would have been still more illustrious, if after having purchased and conquered his kingdom he had done this, and if he had become the founder of a regular constitution. Historical facts have not furnished me with the means of deciding in a proper manner, if ever he found himself in a situation to acquire this glory, or if he then could have made any attempts of that kind, with a greater degree of safety than has been done on a recent occasion. But it is very probable that he never had any of this kind. If you read the Memoirs of Sully with attention (and I suppose that the opinions of the Minister differed little from those of his master,) you will easily perceive that they were both royalists in all the extent of the expression, and, with some few exceptions, they constantly maintained that species of government.

"As to the blood that Henry shed, he never spilt one drop more than was necessary for the maintenance of his *right*, which he on no occasion would submit to any species of popular decision; he however could *kill* when it was necessary. How many bloody battles did he not fight against the majority of the French nation? How many cities did he not sack and pillage? Was his Minister ashamed of sharing the booty that fell into his hands? It is true, that while closely besieging his own capital, he relieved and protected the unfortunate families who, at the peril of their lives, sallied forth to gather a scanty harvest under the walls of this very capital. I approve this conduct, but it does not inspire me with an enthusiastic admiration. He would have almost been a monster in cruelty, and an idiot in politics, had he done otherwise. But while he was so compassionate to a few wretches dying of hunger, one cannot forget that it was he himself who famished them by hundreds and by thousands, before he was in a situation to treat thus compassionately a few isolated individuals. It is true, indeed, that in starving Paris he did nothing but what was conformable to the right of war; but that was a right which he enforced in all its plenitude. He followed the dictates of his heart and of his policy in the acts of compassion attributed to him; as to the famine which he occasioned, it was in consequence of the position of his army. But can you support the panegyrists of Henry IV. in regard to this very siege of Paris, when you recollect the late deplorable scarcity, and above all, what has been done in consequence of that unhappy epoch? Of the occurrences that followed I shall not speak at present, although I think that that ought to be done to inspire every honest heart with horror and indignation.

"As to the 'scaffold,' it is impossible to decide at this moment whether it would not have been more prudent for Henry IV. to have saved the Marechal de Biron, instead of cutting off his head within the walls of the Bastille. He was under great obligations to this Marechal of France, as well as to his father; but Henry was less remarkable for his gratitude than his clemency. As he never shed blood but for just reasons, I suppose that he thought himself obliged to do it then, on account of the good of his people, and the security of his throne. It must be allowed, however, that if he had pardoned this rash and impetuous man, he would never have been reproached with this act of commiseration. If he imagined that the Marechal de Biron was capable of some of those scenes which we have lately seen exhibited in your kingdom; if he supposed that he might produce the same anarchy, the same confusion, and the same distress,* as the preliminaries to a humiliating and vexatious tyranny, which we are on the point of beholding in France under the name of a Constitution; it was right, very right, to cut, on its very formation, the very first thread of so many treasons!

"He would never have merited the crown that he acquired, and which he wore with so much glory, if, interposing his compassion to defeat the preservative effects of a severe execution, he had scrupled to punish those traitors and enemies of their country, and of the human race; for, believe me, there can be no virtue where there is no wisdom. Weakness only, that is to say, the parent and ally of crimes, would have allowed itself to be affected by misdeeds, which have a connexion with power, and which aim at the usurpation of a certain degree of authority. To pardon such enemies is to do the same thing as those who attempt the destruction of religion, of the laws, of policy, of morality, of industry, of liberty, and of the prosperity of your country. If Henry IV. had such subjects as those who rule France at this very moment, he would do nothing more than his duty in punishing them. The present sovereign is in the situation of a victim, and not the avenger of rebellion. It is rather a misfortune than a crime, that he has not prevented this revolution with that vigorous precaution, that activity, and that momentary decision, which characterised Henry IV. Louis XVI., according to what I hear and believe, has received from nature as perfect an understanding, and a heart as soft and humane, as his illustrious ancestor. These are, indeed, the elements of virtue; but he was born under the canopy of a throne, and was not prepared by adversity for a situation, the trials of which the most perfect and the most absolute virtue could have scarce resisted.

---

* The allusion to the late Duke of Orleans in this passage is evident.

"As to the men, the means, the pretexts, the projects, the consequences arising from false plans and false calculations of every nature and every species, which have reduced this sovereign to appear in no better light than an instrument for the ruin of his country—these are circumstances to be recorded and commented on by the historian.—These remarks, Sir, have been occasioned by reading your letter; you may print them as an appendix to your work, or in whatever manner you please; or you may keep them for your own private satisfaction. I leave it entirely to your discretion.

"I am, Sir,
"Your very humble servant,
"E. Burke.

"Beaconsfield, January 2d, 1791."

Page 361.—NEGRO CODE.

Since the preceding part of this work was printed off, the new regulations for the improvement of the condition of the slaves in some of the West India Islands have been laid before Parliament. They are the most wise and humane that could be adopted. Nor is it perhaps their slightest recommendation to have been suggested by Mr. Burke so far back as 1780; for the reader, by referring to his Works, (vol. ix. p. 301,) will find them nearly a transcript from the fourth section, or head, of his Negro Code—another instance of what has been remarked more than once, that his wisdom was almost always in advance of the age in which he lived.

Page 366.—FRENCH CLERGY.

[The following plain and dispassionate appeal to public liberality in favour of this distressed body, drawn up by Mr. Burke, and distributed in September, 1792, produced a handsome subscription; it is given here on account of not appearing in any other volume connected with him.]

"It is well known that a cruel and inhuman persecution is now and hath for some time past been carried on by a faction of atheists, infidels, and other persons of evil principles and dispositions, calling themselves philosophers, against our brethren the christians of France. In this persecution, a vast multitude of persons of all ages, sexes, and conditions, and particularly the clergy, have suffered in a grievous manner. Many of them have been, with circumstances of great barbarity and outrage, put to death, and their bodies, according to the customs lately prevalent in France, treated with savage indignities.

"Several women, of whom some were of rank, dedicated to religion, in the peculiar exercise of a sublime charity, by an attendance on the sick in hospitals, have been stripped naked, and in public barbarously scourged. Thousands of other respectable religious women, mostly engaged in the education of persons of their own sex, and other laudable occupations, have been deprived of their estates, and expelled from their houses, in which they had purchased a property by the portions given to them by their parents. These respectable women are many of them far advanced in years, and labouring under great infirmities; the major part are at, or near, the declining period of life, and all are utterly inconversant in the affairs of the world, and in the means of procuring themselves any subsistence. They, by whose charity they scantily subsisted, under every species of insult, vexation, and oppression, before their expulsion from their houses by the philosophic faction, are now, for the most part, themselves obliged to fly their country, or are reduced to almost an equal degree of penury with those they had been accustomed to relieve.

"Many thousands of the parochial clergy, after having been driven from their livings and houses, and robbed of their legal property, have been deprived of the wretched pensions which had been by public faith stipulated to be paid to them when that robbery and expulsion were ordered; and have been exposed to perish by famine. Others, in very great numbers, have been arbitrarily thrown into unwholesome prisons, and kept there for a long time without any redress, against all law, and against the direct orders of the supreme magistrate of their new constitution, whose duty it was to see that no illegal punishment should be executed. At length, after a tedious imprisonment, (suffered with a mildness, a patience, and a constancy which have not been denied by their very persecutors, whose rage, and malice, however, these examples of christian virtue have failed in the least degree to mitigate,) the municipal bodies, or the factious clubs who appoint and guide them, have by their proper authority transported into a foreign kingdom a considerable number of these prisoners in slave ships. At the same time, all the rest of the clergy, who by lying hid, or flying from place to place, have hitherto escaped confinement; and endeavoured in private to worship God according to their consciences, and the ancient fundamental laws of their country, are hunted out like wild beasts; and a decree of the National Assembly itself has now ordered them, in terms the most insulting and atrocious ever used by a public assembly, to quit the kingdom within fifteen days, without the least preparation and provision, or, together with those imprisoned, and not yet exiled, to be instantly trans ported to the most wild, uncultivated, and pestiferous part of the whole globe; that is to Guiana, in South America.

"All this has been done without calling upon one single person of the many thousands subject to this severe and iniquitous sentence, as well as to all the cruel preceding oppressions, to any specified offence or charge whatsoever. Several of the said clergy, some of whom are aged and infirm persons, to avoid imprisonment and the other various vexations above mentioned, and in many cases to prevent the commission of further crimes, in the destruction of their respective flocks for their attachment to their pastors, have been obliged to fly their country, and to take refuge in the British dominions, where their general exemplary behaviour has greatly added to the compassion excited by their unmerited sufferings. * * * *

"It is confidently hoped that a difference in religious persuasion will not shut the hearts of the English public against their suffering brethren, the christians of France; but that all true sons of the Church of England, all true subjects of our Saviour, Jesus Christ, who are not ashamed, in this time of apostacy or prevarication, to confess their obedience to, and imitation of their divine Master in their charity to their suffering brethren of all denominations—it is hoped, that all persons who from the inbred sentiments of a generous nature cultivate the virtues of humanity—it is hoped, that all persons attached to the cause of religious and civil liberty as it is connected with law and order —it is hoped, that all these will be gratified in having an opportunity of contributing to the support of these worthy sufferers in the cause of honour, virtue, loyalty, and religion." (Mention is then made of the subscriptions for the people of Lisbon, after the earthquake, and the French prisoners of war, in 1761.)

"We trust that such of our countrymen as were then alive are still mindful of their former virtue; and that the generation which has succeeded is emulous of the good actions of their ancestors. The gentlemen for whom this subscription is proposed, have never been guilty of any evil design against us. They have fled for refuge to this sanctuary. They are here under the sacred protection of hospitality.—Englishmen who cherish the virtue of hospitality, and who do not wish an hard and scanty construction of its laws, will not think it enough that such guests are in safety from the violence of their own countrymen, while they perish from our neglect.

"These respectable sufferers are much greater objects of compassion than soldiers and mariners, men professionally formed to hardships, and the vicissitudes of life—our sufferers are men of peaceful, studious, uniform habits; in a course of life entered into upon prospects and provisions held out by the laws, and by all men reputed certain. Perhaps of all persons in the world, they had the least reason to look for imprisonment, exile, and famine. Englishmen will not argue crime from misfortune. They will have an awful feeling of the uncertain nature of all human prosperity. These men had their establishments too; they were protected by laws; they were endowed with revenues. They had houses, they had estates. And it is but the other day that these very persons distributed alms in their own country, for whom, in their extreme necessities, alms are now requested in a foreign land." (The Bishop of St. Pol de Leon is proposed to distribute the subscription, as best acquainted with the wants and claims of the sufferers; and a postscript is added)—"Since the drawing up of this case, many hundred of the clergy have been massacred at Paris, with the venerable Archbishop of Arles, a prelate, the greatest ornament of the Gallican church in virtue and knowledge, and four other eminent and worthy bishops at their head. Some bishops, and a considerable number of the inferior clergy, are arrived, and are daily, and almost hourly arriving, since that horrible slaughter."

INDEX.

Abdiel, Mr. Burke compared to - *Page* 352
Abingdon, Earl of - - - 187
Affairs, Heads for consideration on - 368
Agency for New York - - 144
America, Mr. Burke meditates going to - 64
American conciliation, speech on - - 169
——— Taxation, ditto - - 151
Annual Register - - - 66
Answers to Mr. Burke's Reflections - 344
Appeal from new to old Whigs - - 347
Arcot, Nabob, debts of - - 263
Army Estimates, debate on - - 314
Arts, Communication on the - - 246
Auckland, Lord's, pamphlet - - 395
Authorship - - - 61

Ballitore - - - 21
Barré, Colonel - - 195, 242
Barry, the painter - - 85, 120, 143, 156
——— ——— letters to 108, 120, 121, 125, 126, 130, 157, 188
Bath, Mr. Burke at - - - 57, 413
Beattie, Dr. - - - 143, 324
Bedford, Duke of - - - 402
Bolingbroke, Lord, imitation of - 52
Boston Port Bill - - - 151
Bourbons, Advice to the - - 375
Bourke, Mr. W. - - 60, 72, 190, 381
Brissot's Address - - 381
Bristol, Mr. Burke elected for - - 165
——— ——— rejected at - 216
Brocklesby, Dr. - - 22, 44, 361
Burgh, Thomas, Esq., letter to - 205

Burke, Edmund, birth of *Page* 18
——— ———'s benevolence 213, 214, 222, 224, 240, 397
——— ——— compared with Mr. Pitt and Mr. Fox 485
——— ——— conversation 426
——— ——— death, 417
——— ——— disinterestedness 102, 107, 238
——— ——— eloquence 281, 447
——— ——— first effort in Parliament 95
——— ——— grief 390
——— ——— moral character 431
——— ——— person 423
——— ——— piety 430
——— ——— public principles 475
——— ——— qualifications for Parliament 104
——— ——— slanders concerning 213, 410
——— ——— schools 20, 21
——— ——— wit 179, 189, 204, 209, 438
——— ——— writings, 462
——— ——— zeal 434
——— family of 18
——— Garrett 18
——— Mrs. 58, 63, 419
——— Richard 18, 85, 139, 243, 379
——— ———, jun. 65, 221, 264, 356, 364, 386
——— Thomas Haviland 19, 421

Cannibal Republic 406
Castletown Roche, 17, 20
Catherine of Russia 354
Cazalés, M. 364, 440
Charlemont, Lord 73, 104
——— ——— letters to 180, 239, 287, 288, 297, 356
Chatham, Lord 100, 196
Children, Mr. Burke's fondness for 77
Coalition Ministry 241, 243
Conduct of the Minority 372
Corporation and Test Acts 318
Crabbe, Rev. Mr. 432
Cruger, Mr. 167
Curwen, Mr. 345, 443

Dagger, produced by Mr. Burke 365
Debates, publishing of 148
Debi Sing, cruelties of 281
Discontents, thoughts on 139
Dissenters, relief of 144, 318, 362

Dunning, Mr. - - - *Page* 208, 242
Dyer, Mr. - - - 147

Economical reform - - 206, 222, 238
Eden, Mr - - - 244
Ellenborough, Lord - - 271
Elliot, Mr. letter to - - - 394
Eneid - - - 31
England, Mr. Burke travels in - - 43
English History, abridgment of - 65
Epitaph, jocular, on Mr. Burke - - 155
——— proposed alteration of Goldsmith's - 182
——— on Mr. Dowdeswell - - 182
Erskine, Lord - - 171, 244, 324, 351
European Settlements in America - 59
Eustatius, St. - - - 230, 240

Fitzherbert, Mr. - - 92, 98
Flood, Mr. - - - 28, 82
Fox, Mr. - 135, 171, 234, 336, 365, 369, 441, 486
France visited by Mr. Burke, - - 64, 146
Francis, Mr. letter to - - 190
Franklin, Dr. - - 115, 175, 229, 232
French affairs, memorial on - - 354

Gentlemen of Bristol, two letters to - - 198
Georgic, translation of part - - 32
Gibbon, Mr. - - 209, 323, 374
Goldsmith, Dr. - - - 88
Goold, Serjeant - - 463
Gordon, Lord George - - 211
Gregories, estate of - - 108

Hamilton, Mr. Gerard - 74, 80, 319, 442
Hartley, Mr. - - - 172
Hardy, Mr. - - - 289
Hastings, Mr., prosecution of - 264
——— ——— character of - - 278
Haviland, General - - 420
——— Mrs. - - - - 422
Historical Society - - 37
House of Commons, character of - - 149
Howard, Mr. - - - 218
Hume, Mr. - - - 70
Hutcheson, Dr. Francis - - 45

India Bill Page 217
——— Mr. Burke's speech on 248

Indians, employment of 194
Ireland, trade of 197
——— visited by Mr. Burke 84, 103, 286
Irish Absentee tax 150
—— propositions 262

Johnson, Dr. 68, 257, 439
——— and Mr. Burke compared 161
Junius 116
Jury bill 142, 349

Kenmare, Lord 76, 231
Keppel, Admiral 200
Killmacleny, Spenser's Castle 17, 20

Langrishe, Sir Hercules, letters to 357, 394
Lauderdale, Earl of 400
Laurens, Hon. H. 231, 232, 330
Law and Lawyers 351
Leadbeater, Mrs. 21, 258, 366, 414
Lectures on Commerce 257
Letter to Sheriffs of Bristol 186
Levis, Duke de 459
Libels, despised by Mr. Burke 226
Literary Club 87
Logan, Rev. Mr. 224
London, Mr. Burke's first visit to 39

Mackintosh, Sir James 330
Macartney, Lord 60, 221, 399
Malton 219
Margate, anecdote of Mr. Burke at 352
Marriage act 225
Meath, Bishop of 82, 391, 416
Menonville, M. de, letters to 308, 311
Metaphysics and Metaphysicians 144
Middle Temple, Mr. Burke's entry at 38
Mirabeau, M. de 440
Montesquieu, M. de 313
Montmorin, M. de, proposed memorial to 335
Morning Chronicle, paragraph in 347
Moser, Mr. letter to 272

Murphy, Mr. *Page* 50, 376

Nagle, Sir Edmund 18
National Assembly, letter to a member of 334
Negro Code 361
Noble Lord, letter to 400
Noble, Mr. 219, 220
North, Lord 148, 195, 204, 205, 207, 245
Nugent, Dr. 57, 177
———— Miss 57

Obedience to constituents questioned 165
Omer's, St. reports of Mr. Burke being at 48
Oxford, Mr. Burke at 374

Paine, Thomas 330
Parliamentary Reform 246, 261
Parr, Dr. 290, 442, 490
Party, choice of 236
——— favouring French Revolution 325
Patronage 112
Peerage proposed to Mr. Burke 392
Pelissier, Dr. 28
Pensions to Mr. Burke 78, 397
Pitt, Mrs. Ann 70
Pitt, Mr. 250, 295, 315, 336, 362, 370, 408, 486
Plaistow, Mr. Burke at 71
Poet, distressed 223
Poetry of Mr. Burke 32, 36
Policy of the Allies, remarks on 375
Portland, letter to the Duke of 372
———— party join Ministry 332
Priestley, Dr. 175
Print of Mr. Burke 353
———— his son 392

Regency, question of the 292
Regicide Peace, letters on 404
Revolution in France 301, 306, 308, 311
———————— Mr. Burke's first opinions on 306, 308, 311
———————— Reflections on, published 321
———— in Poland 328
Reynolds, Sir Joshua 352, 357
Rights of Man 332
Rioters, interceded for 212

Robertson, Dr. letter to - - *Page* 192
Robin Hood Debating Society - 87
Rockingham, Marquis of - 101, 184, 241, 290
Rodney, Admiral - - 221, 240
Roman Catholics - 199, 231, 352, 355, 356, 393, 394
Rousseau characterised - - 313

Scarcity, thoughts on - - - 295
Scotsmen, opinion of - - 256
Shackleton, family of - - - 21
———— Richard - 21, 43, 212, 258, 336
Shelburne, Lord - - 236, 237, 241, 244
Sheridan, Mr. - 227, 276, 285, 316, 490
Short Account of a Short Administration - 102
Simkin's Letters - - 271
Slave Trade - - - 214
Sleigh, Dr. - - - 23, 44
Smith, Dr, Adam - - - 71
——— Baron, letter to - - 393
State of the Nation, observations on - 115
Statue proposed to Mr. Burke - - 199
Statute of Edward I. - - - 179
Stewart, Dugald, Esq. - - 45, 47, 256
Sublime and Beautiful, Essay on - - 55
Swinish Multitude, phrase of - - 326

Thurlow, Lord - - - 296, 439
Tacitus, style of - - 377

University of Dublin - - - 27, 29
———— Address from - 322
University of Glasgow - - 47, 256
———— Oxford, Address from - - 323
———— visited by Mr. Burke 374

Valenciennes, surrender of - - 374
Verney, Lord - - - 201
Vindication of Natural Society - 52
Voltaire - - - 313

Wales, R. H. Prince of - - 297, 299, 362
Watson, Bishop - - - 226
War, revolutionary - - 369
Wilberforce, Mr. - - - 444

Wilkes, Mr. - - *Page* 98, 114
Windham, Mr. - - - 386, 540
Winstanley, Rev. Mr. - - 374
Woffington, Mrs. - - - 50
Wolf, shearing the - - 230
Woronzow, Count de - - 354

York, Archbishop of - - 274

THE END.

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS
0 020 680 615 1